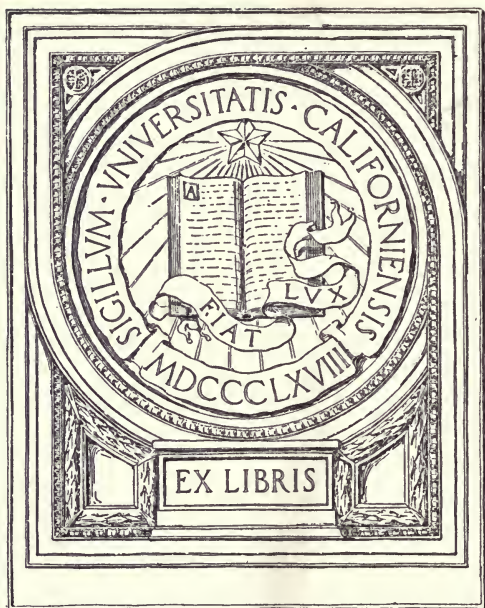


THE LUMP OF GOLD



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THE LUMP of GOLD

By

ESTHER BALDWIN FERGUSON



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The Lump of Gold



CHAPTER I.

Since the days of 1852 Uncle had been a searcher for gold. Many times the god of fortune had filled his coffers with the glittering metal, which we are told paves the streets of heaven.

Certainly, no inhabitant of that place was more happy than he when richly rewarded after his toilsome efforts of separating the debris by rushing the water down the sluice boxes, leaving only the black sand and quicksilver, then delving in the bottom to scoop it.

Frequently the gold was only dust and required the aid of quicksilver, which separates into myriads of tiny balls like shot, when urged on by the swift current of water, rolled and tumbled along the surface and into every crack, corner and crevice of the boxes, gathering the millions of minute particles of gold in its embrace.

How Uncle's arms would ache after shoveling, picking, sweeping, and panning.

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Ah! the pains all forsook him as he took from the pan a massive lump that was the image of a large ball of silver.

Very well he knew its value as reckoned in dollars and cents. Experience had made him quite an accurate guesser. But it must be transmitted into gold, for silver had not much value as worth.

He placed it in a retort, and as the fire burned it into a red-hot heat, he watched the quicksilver flow out of a pipe into a pan of water, where it lay as calmly as though it had not been madly rushing, pell-mell, hurry-scurry, to grab and usurp unscrupulously every innocent, unspotted golden morsel as it made its debut into the world.

With satisfaction, Uncle took the lump from the retort, and viewed its brilliant, golden aspect. To him it meant a just and honest reward for his laborious efforts to enter the labyrinths and channels, which had sacredly guarded their untold wealth for ages. His patience and efforts had not flagged, and was ever on the alert for every stratum and substratum that indicated the sleeping place of gold.

He knew that the grand old snow-formed rivers from the high Sierras, which came roaring, tearing, flashing and splashing over stupendous precipices, entered many subterranean vaults of gold, and dashing them asunder, carried their riches in its billowy arm and distributed them in many of its byways, passages and gorges, where it would be difficult for even a necromancer of fate to find it.

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But Uncle's sagacity had prevailed, for the magnificent old river had left too many symbols in its wake. And nothing undaunted, he fearlessly prepared to disgregate its hidden treasures with pick and shovel in the hands of his trusty men, and blast the entrance to the golden cells with dynamite.

Was he a robber? No! For the Arch Being has placed His riches in such a manner that man can become its possessor by the sweat of his brow.

Uncle had not coveted his neighbor's belongings, neither was he avaricious, but he was well aware that that lump of gold was a sinecure that would help pave the avenues which would radiate a benefaction in the sunset of his life.

But how was he to keep this particular gold, which he had liberated from mother earth, free from blending with the contaminations to which its kind was subject? In his loyalty to benevolence he soliloquized as he still held it in his hand:

"My beauty, we must part. I cannot keep you. My depleted exchequer compels me. It is best. You have lain dormant for centuries, but now you have a mission before you. Shall it be to contribute to the morality of humanity, and help build up a structure of love, peace, and universal brotherhood, or shall you march in the footsteps of your predecessors, into the shadow of darkness from which every vestige of fellow-feeling is eliminated, and flaunt the finger of scorn at every noble deed

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performed, and gradually sink into the death-mire of iniquity?

"How can I trust you to go unattended, who so recently emerged from your cavernous home, where all is quietude and rest, into the great arena of surge, strife, and ostentatious usurpation?

"Must I be responsible for your manifestos? I unearthed you from your hiding place; I must be. Yet I know so few whom I can trust, to guard and care for you with strict candor and faith."

Spellbound he stood as though dreaming, as a soft, low, musical murmur reached his ear.

"Whence thy sadness, sire? Me thinks thou hast met with great sorrow. I am Fate, and at your service."

Turning, he met the glance of soft, brown, but rather melancholy eyes, belonging to a most charming female, robed in soft folds with fluffy ruffles of illusion.

Her voice was phantom-like, but not discordant. It appealed to his present mental sensibility in a most soothing manner, which was very pacifying.

Appearing not disturbed, but reluctant for digression, yet thankful, he answered: "Not sadness, my fairy friend, but a dilemma is before me to decide the future of this honestly acquired gold."

With a laugh that sounded more like a sylvan echo rolled and swirled by monstrous ocean waves from turreted castles back to lofty mountain heights

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—so sweet, so musical, yet so full of doom, Fate answered:

“That is an easy matter. Place it in my charge. The whole world is under my surveillance. Fortunes are in my hands; why not give me yours?”

Wrinkling his brow in a reflective manner, Uncle recalled that the result of Fate’s watchfulness, which vibrated through the very existence of man, had been slack, slight, hit-or-miss remuneration.

With a look of disdain he responded: “Not for worlds, for in you there is no choice between good and evil.”

With such a verdict, Fate vanished as noiselessly as she had come.

Having determined that Fate should not control its destiny, he decided to have it immediately minted, and to take it himself to make sure that he received coin from this same lump of gold, and not that which might have come from some other place, and when it was returned to him, looking brilliantly lustrous beyond description, with the eagle reposing gracefully majestic on one side, bearing aloft the golden crown set with the jeweled words, “In God we Trust,” he was highly gratified and reflected: “All will be well, but it must have care.” And he comprehended clearly that its value consisted in its prerogative exchange for the necessities of man, and being such, he again soliloquized:

“Your golden jeweled crown should be a protection to your magnificent beauty. It is an ornament

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which ought to commend reverence and respect and be a safeguard into every exalted walk of life.

"But you must be wary. Artifice, deception and danger lurk by the wayside to whirl you into a vortex so rapidly that it will wear away your crown, and lose your jewels in the caldron of iniquity.

"The just do not always escape. Why they do not is one of the mysteries not portrayed to man. I must embark you in the current of life, but with whom? That is the question."

Again he was startled by a calm, clear voice repeating the words: "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith."

Having been trained in orthodoxy unconsciously asked "Why?"

"Because, Faith is the substance of the things hoped for; the evidence of things not seen," was the calm rejoinder.

Rushing to her, he exclaimed: "Really, then, it is faith I require in my emergency."

She answered: "It is, and I am Faith Fairchild."

Scanning her features, he beheld a maiden of quiet, graceful demeanor, and gazing into the depths of her mild blue eyes found truth, peace, love, harmony and trust, and being robed in spotless white linen, signified purity.

Offering his hand said: "Faith, I welcome you with a true heart and with the full assurance that once having plighted your fidelity, as a standard of your Christian name, Faith, I shall have met the

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person for whom I have hungered. The maiden who is of a generous, free-hearted, honest frankness, without gush, guile or deceit, of whom I have heard but have never seen."

Demurely she thanked him, and asked: "Can I be of any service to you?"

Showing her the lump of gold, now turned into twenty-dollar pieces, he explained his desires, saying: "I am compelled to give it into other hands, for my obligations must be met and expenses paid. In my younger years I have brought to light from the earth quantities of gold, but it never cost me a thought as to its future, whether it would merge in vice or excel in merit."

Handing the gold to her, he said: "Here, Faith. I give this into your custody. I know you will guard it as though it had life, and prove worthy of my reliance."

Again, in quiet, measured tones she repeated: "Faith is being the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen is reliance, but sometimes a deluge of the ungodly acts of humanity destroy the pathway in which Faith walks, obscuring the confidences of her trust and truthfulness, and overthrowing every endeavor or effort she may have evinced for the prevailment of right."

Earnestly, Uncle bowed a responsive answer: "That is very true my friend Faith. Evidently I have the most profound confidence in your ability to overcome those obstructions, and believe that you

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will be triumphant in maintaining these golden eagles for the betterment of mankind."

"Thank you, Uncle. But please explain more fully. Do you present these coins for the cause of humanity?"

"Unfortunately, Miss Faith Fairchild, my circumstances are such I cannot. Its equivalent in currency will answer every purpose for me, and I will accompany you to some bank of strong financial character and make the exchange."

Arriving there, the banker carefully counted the currency desired, and as Uncle took it, remarked: "It will be much easier to stow away. A tailor can have a good job placing it in the inside lining of my coat, as road-agents infest many of the much-traveled mountain roads, popping out at any moment, and relieve the traveler of their valuables."

Turning to Faith, and taking her hand, he said: "Providence is all-wise, and I am grateful that you were sent to me. I must hie back to the gravel claims, for my boys, although trusty, are inexperienced. So, craving your success, I now bid you farewell."

CHAPTER II.

Dextrously, Faith with the help of the banker, counted and privately marked the coins, which numbered two hundred twenty-dollar gold pieces, and asked of him as a special favor to keep them intact from other money.

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She explained why it had been committed to her special care and desired his assistance in disposing of it in commendable ways, of which the banker assured her as he piled the beautiful new golden twenties in rows, and Faith gave them a most admiring look as she took her departure.

Returning the next day they were still there in all their glittering brilliancy, and for several consecutive days. Then she asked:

"Why have you retained them?" Courteously he answered: "I have had various opportunities, but none satisfactory, Miss Fairchild, only in small quantities. And you requested that it should be let in one thousand sums as being easier to keep in tally."

"Surely," she responded, as he continued. "A man came in today to borrow one thousand dollars and when I asked for what purpose, he said, 'To bet on a sure-win horse race.' Well, Miss Fairchild, you see the coin is still here, and I really believe it was Mutt, that most notorious of all gamblers."

Faith exclaimed: "Oh, I am so thankful you did not let Uncle's coin go in such a cause."

Cleverly the banker said: "There has been a dearth in business proclivities which certainly cannot last, besides many have been out of town taking their vacation, but the season is nearly over, Miss Fairchild."

He had scarcely finished speaking when a silver-haired old lady called and presented a check for one

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thousand dollars, which she had received from her children.

Smilingly the banker asked: "Do you want the whole in cash?"

"It is not best," she said, "but I require five hundred at present, "and her eyes filled with tears of thankfulness as she received the beautiful coins bearing the golden motto, "In God We Trust."

Faith, too, shed sympathizing but happy tears, for this money surely would be spent only in the most needy and sacred ways. It would be issued in the buying of bread and sustenances required for daily consumption, which would reach the man and beast, even though it might be a small recompense for their many hours of hard, tedious and sometimes oppressively toilsome labor.

Surely no harbinger or precursor of fate could ask a better predestination. The little emoluments dispensed in different courses might promote what would be a successful career for the honest worker, giving his children food, raiment, books and educational advantages, thus creating happiness, knowledge and longevity.

Graft and cunning deceit, which are the pitfalls of the ungodly, would have no time for their intriguing intrenchments.

The old lady dropped the money in her old-fashioned reticule, and Faith, feeling truly grateful, said:

"You look very frail my dear Madam. Besides, some of these thoroughfares are quite secluded,

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therefore dangerous for you to traverse unattended."

"You are right," said the old lady, "but I am a stranger here and know not whom to trust."

"I will call my sister, whose name is Truth, and that signifies all that is pure and holy. Every station of honor and sobriety receives its illumination through the established principles and fixed laws of truth."

Extending her hand as Truth approached, the old lady said: "This must be one of the mysterious acts of mercy that you, Miss Truth, are sent to me. It is no fault of my children or my own that I am here alone."

"How is that?" asked Truth, as she took hold of the old lady's arm, the better to assist her.

She answered: "Convalescing from a severe illness, my physicians recommended that I should travel. Accompanied by my daughter, with her two little children, and my daughter-in-law, we started to circle the globe at easy stages. In Italy, my daughter's children were stricken with scarlet fever, therefore, remained while we continued our journey."

"It was quite an undertaking," interposed Truth.

"Yes, Miss Truth, but all went well until after we arrived here. Our voyage had been rather tempestuous and I was weak and wearied, consequently my daughter-in-law procured these very comfortable quarters as you see, determining that I should have a long period of rest."

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"Which was very nice of her," said Truth, as she seated the lady in her easy chair..

"Yes, we were happy, Miss Truth, but a telegram came informing us that my son had met with a perilous accident and his life was despaired of."

"How sad," sympathized Truth. "Yes," tearfully said the old lady, "and I insisted that she should go immediately to him, and on her arrival she wrote the good tidings that he was out of danger and forwarded this check to me. And now, Miss Truth, if you will remain as my companion I shall deem it a great favor."

"No more a favor to you than me, for I love you already. And sister Faith can have her wish fulfilled: That I should look after Uncle's consecrated gold," which explanation required an interpretation to the old lady, who said:

"Well, Miss Truth, my daughter-in-law won my motherly affection, and I know that she will be gratified that I have such a desirable and loving companion."

Laughingly, Truth replied: "Then you are not one of the tabooed mothers-in-law?"

"No; why should I be? A mother's love is the most sacred on earth, and the joys of her children should be her joys, and not the usurper of their happiness. Why, Miss Truth, it was ordained that our children should be wedded to loving companions, and together guide their offspring to the grand and illustrious summit of life while yet they are gliding

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down the inclining slope to the horizon, where the last gleam of sunset emits the still glittering rays as that having characterized their lives unequaled by the lustrous brilliancy of the radiantly beautiful diamond sunburst. Do you not call that happiness, Miss Truth?"

"Certainly, but do you not feel lonely and forsaken?" inquired Truth.

"Why, no, dear Truth, for then I have their united affection and there is no room for jealousy. They arise and call me 'blessed mother.' "

"Which must make you very happy, my dear lady."

"It is more than happiness, Truth. It is bliss and the joy we anticipate in heaven. Now, I will assign you to the room occupied by my daughter-in-law, next to my own."

CHAPTER III.

Truth's constancy was magnetic. The old lady seemed to grow vigorous and thrive under her scrupulous care, industry and management.

But let us return to Faith and her perplexing charge. She counted days before another came which met the approbation of both the banker and herself.

One man wanted to borrow one thousand dollars with which to buy some town lots for speculation. The banker considered it a good investment, but

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Faith viewed the matter as a sort of gamble, or making a market under false pretenses.

The astonished banker said: "Why, it is perfectly legitimate. He expects the lots to rise in value?"

"Well, as I understand it," said Faith. "In order to boom the lots, certain prerogative privileges are quoted as having been applied for, which in themselves might be very unfair, and to cover this defect and raise enthusiasm much puffy literature is given large circulation, which causes a big bubble—and bursts when the lots are disposed of at high figures.

"Thus, surely the lots will depreciate and become a drug on the market."

"But your money will not remain in the hands of the man who borrowed it. It will have been paid out and be in circulation," said he.

Forcefully she retaliated: "I know, and it would go into the hands of the grabbers to pay for the puffs. I believe that these rights of way and privileges are only imaginary to create a flurry and flash in the market, and this man wants the money to start the bubblesome boom."

"Well, it is considered legitimate," the banker repeated.

"Granting that," she returned, "many with limited means, desirous with their carefully hoarded savings, of providing a home for their families, will rush in and buy."

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Sullenly the banker replied: "He takes his chances with the rest."

"But he can ill afford to do so. When the bombastic market is at the highest point, perhaps is the time when he has bought, being eager to possess it before the price should have risen beyond his resources," retorted Faith.

"Then he would receive that for which he was seeking—a home place," the banker returned.

"Not very well said! *A home place!* It would be a PLACE without a home. A shackle! For it would fetter him from paying that much down and the remainder in installments on a neat little cottage near his work and close for the children to attend school."

"In time that would come," argued the banker.

"Not to a certainty," expostulated Faith, "for when the inflator derives his benefit from the balloonish market he grandly and pompously marches off to create another stir in a new district."

The banker debated the point no longer, but felt that Faith was a little too scrupulous in the matter, and was glad of a respite to attend a Bishop who was revered by all who knew him, as his qualifications were fully up to the sanctity of his religious duties.

The Bishop said: "My parishioners have entrusted to my care a check for one thousand dollars, which I present to be cashed. They have conferred and decided to furnish an apartment in the basement

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of our church for the establishment of a resort for young men who have their first outgoing from their childhood's rustic home and paternal roof, under which the love of humanity—which was God's greatest gift—together with honesty, sobriety and virtue were themes not only taught but practiced.

"It is to be a reading room and bible class formed as well. As the room is very large the trustees unanimously favored partitioning and putting in all the apparatus and appertenances peculiar to the meritorious benefit and entertainment of young men after the completion of their daily pursuit."

Faith had been rather absorbed after her discussion with the banker, yet listened and calmly weighed the Bishop's problem in the balance of justice, therefore, smiled an approving glance as the banker handed the money to him. But there was an inward conception that even with that holy Bishop, in whom she had perfect trust, there should be some requirements as a safeguard against guile.

Quickly approaching him she said: "Oh, good and noble Bishop those golden twenties have but recently emerged from mother earth, and I am their custodian as you are of those young men who are entering the embryo of life. The excavator instructed me not to let them go where hazardous environments would encircle them."

The Bishop, rather awed by her zealousness, earnestly responded: "You may trust me young lady."

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Fervently she replied: "I do trust you wholly, but sometimes fate intervenes, so that I can only hope. Yes, hope, and I must have my sister Hope go with you; then I will have no apprehensions. She will be an assistant to you, for she is like her name—Hope—and that is the one thing in life which urges and helps frail mankind to climb thy ladder to surmount the odious, obstinate obstacles which crowd the pathway to fame and everlasting life."

Clasping her hand, the Bishop said: "I will take your sister Hope into my family, and she shall be cherished as a daughter."

Satisfied, Faith asked him to tarry while she sought her sister Hope. Finding her in the dressing room, Faith gave her a rapturous kiss, related her interview with the Bishop, and said:

"Come, dear sister, he is waiting for you."

Never had Hope been more joyful. The anticipation of abiding in a congenial atmosphere of numerical young men, actively engaged in the study of the Divinity and nature whose pastimes thus diverging from the rotating series of transgressions, was hallowed indeed. A feeling of Spirituality inspired her with new and more courageous vigor.

She would not falter in her requirements, for had not Faith, the best loved and sanctified of all her sisters, invested her with the most superior confidence which could be placed in women—that of undoubted virtuous trust? Her energies must

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contribute doubly manifold, for this was a task of affection, honor, and heavenly reliance.

Faith, had no misgivings as to the failure of her devoted sister Hope, for she possessed that quality—hope—which never leaves the human race so long as intellect remains and heart pulsates, and which has been the salvation that has redeemed many of the most abased criminals.

Remembering that two thousand dollars yet remained to be disposed of, she knit her brow and tacitly wished that she would be as fully gratified with their assignment as of the other two.

“Ah,” she soliloquized, “Faith should have no repinings. Why make my name allegorical?”

The banker interrupted her studious attitude by requesting her attention to another check for one thousand dollars, which had been presented.

Said he: “I was dubious about paying it out of your golden fund. The person offering it is a young lady whose father reckons his wealth by the millions. She is betrothed to marry a man of more influence in the political world than its equivalent in money. In fact, he requires cash to balance him in his coming election.”

Instead of answering the banker, Faith advanced to the young lady and said: “I beg your pardon, Miss. Please do not consider me harshly nor yet deem me inquisitive or obtrusive, but there is a motive and much depends upon your answer. I ask: What use is to be made of this gold?”

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Laughingly she answered: "Why, for my special pin money. Mama gave me the check from her own private account and said: 'It is a love offering from your mother to her only child and daughter, and the last while yet she is a virgin. It is a grievous parting and this little amount will be a souvenir remembrance to be used for your own special wants during your wedding trip and honeymoon.' "

"Then this is not to be a mercenary marriage?" mentioned Faith.

"I scarcely comprehend the tendency of your question?" curiously answered the young lady.

Noting her confusion, Faith kindly explained: "What I mean by a mercenary marriage, is one in which the consideration is for profit in a pecuniary way, and used as a stepping stone to social aggrandizement."

"It is not the union of hearts cemented firmly by love and adhesive affection, where the breathings are of the most exhaustless devotion, unchangeable as the sun, and lasting as the universe, no matter if age dims the sight and the silken hair be turned into the finest threads of silver, and the cycle of time changes the whole contour of the figure.

"But, on the contrary, the most flagrant dissensions exist, and the very air seems lurid with stoical feelings while the ear is palsied by the unharmonious clashes of unsavory tumultuous turmoil."

"Oh, my dear Madam, I am affianced to a man

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who makes me his idol, and is devotedly attached to me. In fact, he worships me. Oh, I could not, and would not marry without love. Why, every glance of his eye reflects the deep well in his heart, filled overflowing with love, true, holy love."

Demurely, Faith questioned: "Are you sure? Are you certain that it is not the undue love for your wealth which he must possess you to get?"

"O, yes. If I did not have a penny he would adore me just the same," emphatically rejoined the young lady. "And I love him with my whole heart, and give him my entire devotion, also would trust him with my very life.

"I am certain that nothing can come between us to mar our happiness when we both love so deeply and truly.

"Oh, he is so noble and generous. He cannot do enough for me. You ought to know him, my dear Madam, and must to convince you of his true worth."

Faith's doubts were removed and filled with admiration for the young lady with the glow of such earnest love depicted on every feature of her face, hastened to reply:

"We have not time for that, my dear young lady, but I am thankful that you have experienced true love, for it is the passport to heaven, and the key which opens the door to every conceivable happiness on earth.

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"What is it but 'Love,' for 'God is Love,' that gives us this grand and beautiful world, so full of luxuries to promote our wellbeing; and it is 'Love' that rocks the cradle of the universe to inspire man into wisdom's ways.

"But there are many snares to entrap love—Cupid's love—and it often requires very heavy ransoms to rescue it. Alas! sometimes none can be given."

The banker, much interested in their colloquy, perceiving Faith's conviction in the earnestly authenticated explanation of the young lady, laid the money in front of her, who placed it in her portemonnaie, thanked the banker, and turning to Faith, said: "I am glad you have confidence in me, and I will promise that I will strictly heed that not a penny of this money shall be spent where I think it will fall into the hands of profligacy."

"I am convinced of your honest intentions by your unreserved candor. But, my dear young lady, you will require a maid. If you have not already selected one, I would suggest my sister, Love," said Faith.

"How kind of you, and what a delightful name—Love. Cupid has been frisking around with his bow and arrows and it must be she whom he is hunting. Mama told me 'ere I returned to find some trustworthy girl, and you have greatly relieved me. Please may I see her?"

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Turning, Faith replied: "Certainly, I will ask her to come in. Oh, here she comes," she exclaimed as a young girl entered.

Faith continued as she placed her arm around her sister: "This is my sacredly beautiful sister Love. She is a member of the 'Order of Love,' the fraternity which is the oldest in existence, having been established in the Garden of Eden by Adam and Eve."

"The edict that they should earn their bread by the sweat of their brow did not destroy its pre-eminence, and it has existed through the many intervening centuries, although pursued by venomous enemies that have tried to extinguish it by the most vile transgressions of the traducer."

Faith had an angelic look as she gave utterance to these words, and joining their hands spoke:

"O, sister Love, entwine thyself in the bands when it binds this young lady to her hero lover. Cupid has been active with his arrow in coupling her heart to that of one of creation's noblemen—believing that it will be cemented by consecrated devotion and enrolled on eternity's volume, thus making it enduring.

"And my precious sister, Uncle's spotless and innocent gold has been given as a wedding offering, and while you are guarding the sanctity of its debut, I charge you be vigilant and not sanguine or ready to yield to the professed devoutness of reciprocal love purporting to come from a true heart.

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"Surely, it would be blasphemy to invest you with the guerdon of shame, while you wear purity's emblem as a crown and wield the sceptor of your order over millions of its devoted followers that are seeking to rescue the sinful from the nefarious highway to ruin.

"Your order teaches that true love is undervalued by the use of fraudulent manifestations, which are the falsehood of sordid characters to ensnare you into the cobwebs of anguish and despair.

"Adieu, my sister. That auriole encircling your visage proclaims you a saint, but the holy cannot always achieve every blessing. Your duty lies before you, and do not hesitate to summon your sister Faith if unsurmountable barriers block your way.

Love said: "I will be an earnest worker, dear sister Faith, for the benefit of the ancestral Order of Love. Farewell."

CHAPTER IV.

Love paused a moment in the vestibule to greet her sister Charity, who was just entering the bank. She was loth to pass so hurriedly, for Charity was the noblest of her sisters.

Her features were regular in lineament, but fearless, strong and firm, yet with a diction of pathos which appealed to the compassion and be-

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nevolence of those who were successfully prosperous or who were in want.

Goodness was the virtue of all her transactions. She divested herself of many comforts which would contribute aid or help to the needy, often sharing with them the last mite, as did the widow in the Bible.

The name—Charity—did her honor, as it covered many benefactions, the least of which was the giving of money. She condoned the faults of the youthful erring and conferred pity to the distressed maiden believing not wisely in the constancy of man, and appealed for mercy, when the wronged one sought to shorten her span of life.

She demurred at shaking hands with the betrayer and ushering him into the social circles where again he could exercise his delusive sophistry. Never could Charity believe or convince herself that the Omnipotent had been partial to the sex, as evidenced by His ten commandments, and the making of one heaven to receive purified souls. She asked herself: What of the debaucher and debauchee entering that place? On earth he is received with debonair complacency, while she is relegated to the quarters of the white slave.

Oftimes when alone she soliloquized: "I, Charity, am a woman whose nature is to act liberally, benevolently and favorably toward the moral ignorance of the misguided of either sex, but this state of affairs has my special condolence.

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"O, why cannot my own sex unite in building a fortress to defend womanhood from this fate of condemnation.

"Not alone does the white slave suffer ignominy even though ostracized and consigned by the laws to special street quarters, but the community at large is permeated.

"Parents live in deathly fear that their innocently bred and doted offsprings, just entering the boundary of maturity, therefore, believing in their own infallibility, may by the many enticing devices be allured into the place of sin.

"Frequently mothers are at fault for allowing their daughters from infancy to be clasped promiscuously in the osculatory embrace of the opposite sex that in its abnormal, selfish and uncontrolled state is woman's most dreaded antagonist and fiercest foe. Ignorantly innocent through childhood days, into maturity the maiden assumes discordantly indiscreet judgment and ere the mother is aware her adored daughter is installed in the ranks of the white slave.

"Women are clamoring for suffrage. The time may be far hence, but that need not deter them from rallying around the flag of state—the standard of which is held by their fathers, brothers, husbands and sons—and insist, yea, demand that the white slave with her noxious obligated domicile headquarters be abolished.

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This really is the one unfortunate evil which is so degrading to women and making of them stigma serfs. No wonder they are resorting to extravagant means to obtain suffrage, and it should be theirs unless this terrible evil be obliterated. Should they gain it, their higher education should consist in striving for degrees of the most elevated strength of character, making virtue the absolute standard in support of that glorious flag which waves not only for the freedom of a few, but all.

"Decades of centuries the daughters of Eve have lived in penance. Their fault is being condoned. The state of lethargy is being lifted and by valiant effort the brand can be removed and their escutcheon made manifest with God's pleasure.

"Certainly, already He has lent His divine blessing, else still woman as an entirety might be lurking in a dormant condition in the murky pool of ignorance. Why, it is but a few short years since they began to emerge from their dark obscurity and their brains permitted to expand. But they have battled their antagonisms and are keeping step by step in college lore, literature, professions, the avenues of toil and the independence of livelihood. Not being satisfied they are reaching toward the sciences, where myriads of the sterner sex of the most lofty and superior minds only have dwelt. At the present day those learned men strain their eyes

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in wonder and surprise, and shake their heads in prophecy at the heights their sisters might attain."

Charity, being a mentally born enthusiast waking or sleeping, these rhapsodies were uppermost in her mind, and they had been particularly profound on this morning she had met her sister Love in the corridor of the bank.

After her speedy greetings with Love, Charity still continued her engrossing reflections and approached her sister Faith as she entered the bank.

"Dear sister, my spirits have been much exercised with my life work. The upbuilding of Womanhood and Humanity, and I find much in embryo.

"A great work is before me and I am afraid that I shall have passed through the gates into my everlasting dwelling place without having accomplished my imposed undertaking. Nevertheless, I shall persevere, like the school boy who starts his tiny snow-ball, which at first makes very little development, but as he continually keeps rolling and tumbling it along, around posts, pillars and other various obstructions it attains mammoth proportions, which require the aid of his whole class to keep in rotund motion."

Said Faith: "Earnest endeavors as are yours, sister Charity, are certain of making successful issues, and your life work—now in embryo—will be an everlasting monument to your glory."

"Thank you, Faith. My errand here was to present this check of one thousand dollars, which the

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Humane Society instructed me to use as alms for the really destitute and indigent poor, not through their indolent and extravagant profligacy, but by uncontrollable adverse circumstances, and with no near relative to sustain their wants.

Joyfully Faith responded: "Surely, this is a God-send which will take the last of Uncle's purity gold."

As Charity passed out Faith turned to the banker and said: "Now I am at rest."

Little did she know, with her invincible individuality that her greatest responsibilities had just commenced, for she must contribute her aid to the inexorable efforts which she had invested her sisters, Love, Hope, Truth and Charity, to maintain the integrity of "Uncle's Virgin Gold."

She was fully endued with faith—but can faith always acquire the reward of which she is in quest?

Again returning, Charity asked: "Will you come, sister Faith, and assist me for a time, for I shall require faith which is of your spirit in my efforts to find honest poverty."

CHAPTER V.

Together the sisters, Faith and Charity, delved through all the avenues, streets, and passages of the great city for several weeks. The decidedly

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poor was not by any means the minor quantity, but the minor quality.

To a few of the number they were on the point of delivering funds requisite to their needs, when the sisters decided to probe yet a little deeper into their poverty. And in every instance, so far, outside of those the societies had under their own special charge, they found defective and unworthy expostulations of indigence.

One woman whiningly announced that she had not the means with which to buy food for herself and family, declaring the crust of bread and rind of bacon, which she displayed, was all they had in their larder; that her children were without shoes and the necessary clothing for winter, and there was no one to provide or assist her.

Upon investigation, they found that this very woman had a bank account, having been her deceased husband's legacy—but was miserly and avaricious, and made the same plea to every offer of persons charitably inclined.

Nevertheless, the sisters persevered, but found not one satisfactory case, and had concluded to extend their researches to some other locality or city.

On the eve of their departure, Faith went to the postoffice and received a letter from Love, asking her to come to Chicago with all possible speed, for the bride's eyes were drenched with tears. She wrote:

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"All had been happiness, affection, and love, until one day in Chicago, a few weeks after their indefinite location there, the husband being in a quandry about raising some money, of which he was in pressing need, came home, and in his perplexity thought to get the pin money of his wife. At first he was persuasive, then plaintive, and afterwards raved. Oh! words cannot explain it. I am so grieved. Oh! come to me, my darling sister Faith, for I am weary and alone. Come quickly. Yours trusting sister LOVE."

Faith folded the letter in the envelope and, retracing her footsteps, made a brisk walk back to their living rooms.

Charity had made everything ready for their departure and prepared a dainty evening repast.

As Faith entered and noticed the preparations, she repeated a Bible verse: "All things work together for good to those who love the Lord," for I must eat and away.

"Here; read this, meanwhile, which will explain," handing Love's letter to her sister.

After reading, Charity said: "The Limited Express is due in one-half hour. You will have ample time to catch it, if you do not tarry too long.

"Here are your gloves. I will assist you to carry the suit case, and we can deliberate on the way as to the best course for my work."

Said Faith: "My beloved sister Charity, Faith can only say: 'Follow the dictates of your own

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worthy and loyal conscience, which none but Charity and the true-hearted can possess."

Charity clearly responded: "So be it, and when shall we meet again?"

Faith replied: "Charity and Faith! There is an adherence between them; there can be no real separation. Though distance intervenes, a mental telegraphy, which is the spontaneous reverberating of the spiritual soul for soul, unites them in their righteous cause.

"Here is the train, dear sister Charity. Though our bodies are laid in the dust, you and I shall always live," and she clasped her sister Charity's hand fervently for an instant, then boarded the Limited Express, which bore her away with lightning dispatch.

CHAPTER VI.

Arriving in Chicago, as she stepped from the train, Faith espied her sister Love standing in an unobserved space, and noting her pale, careworn look, hurriedly folded her to her bosom in an affectionate embrace, exclaiming: "Love, my precious sister Love, why this pallor?"

Love answered: "I cannot explain explicitly. My heart is sore and grieved."

"But why are you alone? Why is not Cupid in attendance? He should be here, for he is the god of Love. Has he forsaken you?" rapidly inquired Faith in undisguised concern.

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Faintly Love moved her lips and the soft, mellow sound which issued forth was like the refrain from the souging gentle zephyrs as the orb of day sinks to rest, dropping the evening shades, producing a shadowy light, which discloses a dome studded with millions of brilliantly lustrous and scintillating gems, whose twinkling and dancing rays illumine the whole nebulae of space and which astronomers call worlds of vast proportions. Thus, love—true love is defined.

“My darling and precious sister Faith of such true fidelity and belief, I must answer you, that I know not. He has disappeared without a moment’s warning and my researches have all been in vain.”

And then Faith said: “But we must find him. There is no happiness on earth for Love without Cupid and his arrows. Rest here while I seek him.”

“Nay, nay! I cannot. I must go with you, Faith, for he may have received a wound from one of his arrows which only love can heal.”

They boarded an auto, which glided rapidly with no apparent effort, except the summoning forth of a hissing sensation, much as a rattlesnake giving the alarm, “Beware of me; my bite is death.”

On, on they flew through the grand city, whose structures meant accumulated wealth, until they had reached the habitations of those who had amassed the riches to construct such ponderous edifices.

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They alighted before one of the most pretentious of these residences, which the politician had leased, as being adequate from a social point of view to gain votes, which was ever his inward homily—meanwhile asserting profusely to his bride, that he had provided this palatial home as befitting the child of her father's millions, and his own devotion and unalloyed love.

Timidly Love rang the doorbell, and was courteously received by the servant, who smilingly recognized Love, and said: "You are tired?"

"Yes, I am very weary, but can I go to my lady. My sister Faith is here with me."

The servant replied: "I shall go and see."

Returning, she said: "My mistress is ailing and requests that you come up to her rooms."

Love said: "Thank you, I know she must need me. Come Faith, it is folly for me to go alone. Really, Sister, it is faith that her aching heart requires and is its only panacea, for she has been defrauded by the love of man, and with Cupid gone, it is doubtless if I can instill her with the power of love, evermore."

Silently Faith followed her sister through the many richly appointed and magnificently hung upholstered halls and rooms, containing unparalleled paintings and priceless statuary.

Never before had Faith entered a home with such elegant surroundings, yet she appreciated it as being the web, woof and workmanship which pro-

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vided the necessities of life for the diligent poor. She deemed hoarded money of no advantage, and that it, within itself had no intrinsic value. Its importance, being only real when requisite to procure the essential commodities efficient for the gratification of the wants of mankind.

They ascended a flight of stairs and soon entered a boudoir of exquisite silken hangings and established order, where happiness should have ruled supreme.

A lady was reclining in an easy chair with her feet on the fender of the grate, trying by artificial means to diffuse into them the warmth that had once pulsed with every throb of her heart and ran rioting through her veins, casting a ruddy glow over the whole system, which by the throes of anguish and despair was now frigidly numb.

Tearfully Love glided to her and threw her arms affectionately around her neck, asking: "Oh, my dear lady, did you miss me? Your maid, Love."

Furiously she tore herself from the embrace, arose and scornfully said: "Love! Miss Love? No, emphatically no. Love is delusive."

"Surely, surely you are mistaken," said Love. "The embodiment of our very being, it was intended should be incorporated with love and was one of Divine gift and blessing."

Thoughtfully the lady answered: "I once had a very tender feeling which was like the sunbeam

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gleaming on the dew drops that nourished a delicate little tendril as it peeped from its embryo in the soil, imparting to it a vitality which strengthened into vigorous growth and developed a flower which in its purity was as spotless as the lily; but a tornado from the snow-bound regions came and exhaled its icy breath over its delicate, translucent, but firm and lasting texture, congealing it so that no sunbeam could restore it to its wonted grace, but cause it to wither and droop, therefore turning it into an obstacle of scorn which admits of no love."

Again Love tried to approach her, but recoiled in grief as she saw the despondent, dejected face of her lady with savageness beaming from her eyes. Yet she strove once more to comfort the agonized soul.

"My dear lady, do not send me away or extrude me—Love—who would be happy to restore your own true love, which was the fountain of thy life.

"It is as the fragrance quaffed from that delicate flower and can do much to alleviate your sufferings. It is nurtured as by the gentle zephyrs that will embrace and strengthen you, coming from a heavenly clime, where there is no deceptive atmosphere, conjuring you to believe that the dew drops which enveloped your lily white flower were those of faithful love, when they were but the globules falling from an icicle, drop by drop, tempering them into the mingling elements of love until the orb of day passed its zenith and revolved to the horizon,

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carrying its warmth into the shades of oblivion. Then it was that your god of love was sacrificed on the altar of ambition's greed. But my dear lady, might not there be a root or even a seed left, which, by affection's offering to your husband, might yet be cultivated into a spontaneous growth that no chilling blasts could cause to decay? Then the warmth of love's devotion would be fanned by those ardent zephyrs from the heavenly clime and engross your souls with the raptures of love—true love—which never chills the heart or agonizes the body."

Cheered by her compliant attitude, Love continued: "My sister Faith is with me, and will help expunge all your wrongs and assuage your woes."

A maniac's piercing cry and anguished raving could not have been more excruciating or penetrating than was hers, as she shouted:

"Faith? I want naught of her. It was she who exacted of me a promise to expurgate that money and duped me in my simplicity and trustful love to extol my matrimonial alliance with my idolatrous god by guaranteeing that we were to sail by the ship of love on the waters of a cloudless sea."

"Not duped, my dear lady. You misunderstood her," said Love. "Faith, my sister, was responsible for the expenditure of that money, and only wanted you to use it judiciously for your own requirements. She is inflicted with much mental pain that your marriage should have terminated into sorrowful anguish, and it is her endeavor to invest you with

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the quietude and repose which comes from faith in the Holy One as being your arbitrator."

Faith advanced, holding out her hand in greeting, but the lady clasped hers behind her, laughing hoarsely:

"Ha, ha, ha! Why does she not calm the ocean's waves? Repose! Do the demons in Hades have repose? Faith! I tore faith from my escutcheon when Cupid, the god of love, fled. And I want you, Miss Love, no longer as my companion, for I have another now, the demon's daughter, Hate, and together we will march under the banner of Revenge."

Astonished beyond measure, they retreated toward the door, and Faith's mind whisperings were: "Can this transformation into a demon be the beautiful young lady whose soulful eyes enlisted my utmost confidence, and every feature, wish and will was wrapped in the most holy fervency of sacrificing loyalty to her affianced hero lover? What had become of that devoted and heavenly look? It was as the adoration of angels, and inspired awe with celestial desires."

Faith could not comprehend it. Had Cupid been derelict in his duty? He was the god of love and had sole dominion. He should have exemplified his superiority and banished every intruder.

Again Faith said: "Please, dear lady, I do not solicit or seek to obtain or intrude on your con-

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fidence, but can you tell me why Cupid let enemies penetrate his kingdom?"

Vindictively she answered: "Cupid is a fraud. He was the messenger who conveyed the strategy to get my money. I want naught of him. He is full of deceit."

"But really, how can this be? And where is he?" persistently inquired Faith.

With a malignant, fiendish laugh the lady shouted: "Ask Cupid when you find him. I do not know where he is."

Faith asked: "Will you grant us the privilege of searching your premises for him?"

Reluctantly she nodded an assent.

CHAPTER VII.

Sorrowfully Faith and Love retired. Walking down the long hall, Faith said: "It is my belief that Cupid is not far away, but we will descend this stairway. Ah! here is a cloak room at the foot; let us look in."

Sure enough, they were rewarded by finding Cupid secreted in an obscure corner, being too crest-fallen to hie far distant. He was no longer the pompous, debonair or puffy god, but woe-begone and disconsolate. The arrows which remained in his quiver was in confused order. His wings were drooped, and blood was oozing from a wound in his side.

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Love knelt beside him, crying: "Oh, Cupid! Why have you forsaken me? I am powerless without you."

Sadly smiling, he answered: "No, Love. I could not do that, for we are irrevocably united by bonds which cannot be severed. I stayed, thinking Peace might lurk around and need me to aim my bow and arrow to recapture the departed love as the rupture was being healed, when in rushed Hate, with her canting, corrupting, viperish virus and vitiated purposes."

Faith interrupted. "But you are bleeding, Cupid. How did you receive your wound?"

Faintly he answered: "I had made the attempt to retain the two hearts through which my arrow had pierced. In one the seat of affection was void of love and filled with mercenary profit, otherwise Hate could not have come in and unstrung them. And in the struggle she thrust me perniciously with the point of the arrow as she released the deceitful heart."

"Really, it is deplorable," said Faith. "But Love, your queen, who can heal all wounds, is here waiting for you and is the only balm you require. Fraud and Love can be united no more than quicksilver and water. But, Cupid, about the money, Uncle's pure and inoffensive coins. Where are they? Can you tell me about them?"

"I can," responded Cupid. "I was there and heard the politician-husband caressingly ask his wife

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for her one thousand dollars, to use as a beginning in his election career.

"Placing her beautiful arms around his neck, and caressingly, she said: 'Oh, my dear love, I cannot let you have that.

" 'Why not?' he asked.

" 'Because, dear, mama said for me to keep it for my own personal use, as it was her last gift to me before I took another name. Then, too, I made another promise,' and she sweetly told him of the assurance she had made to you, Miss Faith.

"Very angrily he exclaimed: 'That is just like the ninny you are, to make such a heathenish promises.'

"Her face grew scarlet, and she said: 'But I had the right. It was my own money.'

"He retored: 'You are my wife now and promised to obey me, therefore I demand it.'

"Flaming at the insult, his wife reiterated: 'I explained to you my promise to keep it intact by using it for my own simple wants and of the gift out of my mother's own dower to her virgin daughter, and it is an unpardonable affront for you to ask it of me and much greater offense to demand it. Marrying you did not make me your slave, and by the laws of God and man you have not the right of exaction.'

"With a curse he responded: 'But what of your vow to obey me?'

"Her wrath was furious as she proclaimed: 'I vowed to obey your love, which you so profusely

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and fervently declared, and not your tyranny. Never will I yield to your abusive demands.'

"He interrupted her with base maledictions and curses; denounced her father because he had invested the daughter's marriage portion in interest-bearing bonds, payable quarterly to her, and left entirely to her discretion what disposition should be made of it, thus denoting his admissibility of a mercenary marriage.

"Stung by disappointment and chagrined beyond measure that he could not command the money for which he had planned and of which present circumstances required the immediate necessity, he lost entire control of his emotions, and like a madman shouted:

" 'Your father thought to make me a member of his serfdom, thus kneeling as a serf at your feet. But thanks to the marriage bond you are mine. Not yield to me, you say? By —— you do not have to concede, for you are mine. The law gives me possession of you, and your money shall be mine, too, and I will have it!' he shouted, as he made a dash for the porte-monnaie in the the escritoire.

"She clutched him, screaming: 'But I did not promise or vow "With all my worldly goods I thee endow," but you did vow to endow me with all thy worldly goods.'

" 'Now where are the two thousand dollars you had when we arrived here?'

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"‘Why do you take my pin-money when you have that?’

"He yelled: ‘None of your business, my fine lady!’ disengaging himself by hurling her to the floor.

"Then it was," said Cupid, "that I received my stab, for Hate rapidly glided in, leaving the door ajar, and I made my escape."

"But Cupid, did the politician get the money, Uncle's sacred money?" anxiously inquired Faith.

"Yes," he answered. "As I was making my way into the cloak-room I halted at the door as I heard footsteps, and saw the politician pass with purse in hand and rush through the hall into the street."

"Then," said Faith, "we must not linger here, sister Love. We must hasten to its rescue before it reaches its doom of condemnation of which Uncle spoke. Come, sister. Cupid has found your love an infallible remedy, so that he can follow at his will."

CHAPTER VIII.

Entering the street, Love asked: "Faith, why did the politician take his bride's wedding present and pin-money when he had so much of his own and really had vowed to endow it to her?"

"That is truly inconceivable," said Faith, "and we must unravel the inducement, for Uncle's sacred money is at stake."

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"But how are we to solve it in this great city, with so many avenues of resources?" asked Love.

Faith, as though soliloquizing, answered: "Worthily and true fidelity always receives its reward, being guided by some unknown or invisible method of instinctive power, which is another of the great mysteries.

"Here, Love, let us board this auto, which will the more rapidly bear us to the vicinity which is principally the rendezvous of men."

They rode on and on. Love, somewhat restored, sat viewing the great thoroughfares, crowded with tumultuous people, marching hither and thither, each marking a particular ambitious tendency, whether it be for weal or woe.

Tremulously she asked of Faith: "How can you know where to go?"

"I can only trust to the great guide of the promptings of truth. We will ask the chauffeur to pass the political headquarters and the principal center of business transactions," said Faith.

It was not long ere they noticed but few women among the passers by, so Faith said: "Let us walk now; possibly we may meet the politician."

It was difficult to make headway, the crowd became so dense. "Look, Faith, at that stately building; the throng seems to make that their intermediate point."

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"There will be no harm for us to look in, too," said Faith, as they entered the big doors. Suddenly a sound reached their ears.

"Oh, Love," said Faith, "does not that sound like the shrieking of vultures as they tear their prey in pieces? There, there! That screech, screech, clink, clink. It must be eagles. Oh, sister, can it be possible that uncle's coins with their precious motto, 'In God we Trust,' are enlisted in such a heterogeneous tumult? None but rapacious tyrants would unconcionably usurp the ostensible purpose of that holy ensign in their unmerciful strife for unrighteous gain.

"Come, Love, come; follow me. Let us make haste."

Moving forward, they entered the building and turned into an ampitheater-like gallery, occupied mostly by women, overlooking a pit of vast dimensions, filled exclusively with men.

The clamoring was almost deafening. Faith had read of the screechings of that emblematical bird, the eagle, while seeking prey, and she could but liken them to these human beings after their booty of gold.

The vociferously repeated yells impregnated the whole area with a hoarsely rasping shriek—sending it ringing and seething through the head, which made the very brain turbulent as though it were the riotous clashing of the ungodly weapons in warlike strife.

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Faith felt baffled and contemplated. "Should I—Faith—who so full of faith and fullness of promise—become frustrated, thus making me fallible?"

"True faith never wavers but endures to the end, even though it be bitter. My destiny is to seek and give aid to the vacillating whose walk, leading to the happier life, has been filled with quagmires and burthensome loads, making a barrier almost impassable.

"When they are disheartened and about to abandon it, having arrived at the forks, they cast one lingering, hesitating glance at the divergent roads ahead and with exulting smile and hastening footsteps seek the broad and alluringly brilliant one, not noting that it terminates in an awful abyss—then it is I, Faith, who gently leads them back to the narrow way, with one hand on their shoulder and the other with index finger pointing straight ahead to the emergency of the boundless, interminable and glorious life of everlasting joy, telling them that true faith can bestow fortitude to reach that spiritual place. And now, have I, too, arrived at the forks where lies the stumbling stone of destiny? Shall my footsteps falter and belie my appointed state? I answer no, a thousand times, for faith is one of the benedictions given to the universal race. Alas! why do not they all accept it?"

Love briskly shook Faith's arm, which brought her out of her reverie, and in an inaudible tone said:

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"Look, look! Faith. There is the politician standing in the gallery quite near us."

"Oh, dear Love, I am so thankful. Perhaps after all that money is safe, as he does not seem inclined to go down in that dreadful pit crowded with distorted, struggling, writhing, perverted humanity who seem to be in an uproar."

"See them bustling, pulling and crowding. It is a perfect incarnation of a pandemonium."

Almost stupefied with pity, Love said: "Faith, Faith, is there no remedy or panacea for those tortured, suffering people?"

"I am afraid not, Love, for they are afflicted by the overwhelming desire to gain money, either by fair means or foul. Immense fortunes are made or forfeited in a few hours' time. Surely the politician, with an earnest desire to stand truly to his platform and honestly serve the people who are to cast their votes for his election, would not mingle his manly qualities among those rapacious, grasping men, much less invest his money without a shadow of security. But, Love, this pit really is only a place of tear, tell, and I will add, yell, for not a dollar is brought to view in their transactions. Therefore it would be a difficult matter to find uncle's marked coins should an investment have been made."

Suddenly they became auditors of a conversation between the politician and his companion, which they were unable to avoid had they desired, for the

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crush had become weighty and wedged the speakers in juxtaposition with Faith and Love.

"I say, Langford, that was a pretty big deal you had the other day, and just before your election time, too."

"Well, not very. I only put in two thousand dollars, but I required more money as my election was at stake, so I thought I would risk it."

"Did you get your wheat to fill all right?"

"No. It had all been grabbed before I arrived at the warehouses. There was not a bushel left," said Langford.

"Why, how was that? They said the warehouses were abundantly filled. Yes, overflowing they called it."

"Yes, that was what was said in the pit," replied Langford; "but the news came from India that there was an entire failure in this season's wheat crop, and thousands rushed to the warehouses and filled their orders, therefore speeded their wheat on to India as fast as electricity and ships could carry it.

"The excitement was exhilarating and contagious, and, my urgent need for money being uppermost in my mind, I, too, became enthused, especially as wheat was so rapidly advancing in price, and just dropped my two thousand in to double it or sell it while yet on the rise, not expecting to call for the wheat.

"But a sudden drop in the prices compelled me to go after it, so I rushed to the warehouses as the

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others had done, but there was none. It was all gone."

"Well, well! did it not jar you?" asked his companion.

"Yes, greatly, but I had no time for expostulations, for the flurry had revived. Some of the insiders were in for a very large amount and were not ready for the bears. So the bulls kept bellowing until the price was marvelous.

"I danced for joy and did not sell, as many thousands were added to my account already and the excitement ran so high I thought the bears had no show at all," explained the politician.

"Ho, ho! that's the reason you did not sell. But how was you caught?" asked his companion.

"Well, you see, the bulls bellowed fiercely until they had disposed of their very last lot."

"Had they the wheat to fill their orders?"

"Oh, no," responded the politician. "It was only a myth, as was mine, but their money was in, don't you see?"

"Ah, ha! yes; and they were on the inside of the workings, while you were outside and knew nothing of them?"

"That was just it. And the very next morning a telegram was exhibited which had arrived the day before, when a slight fluctuating fall in the prices occurred, but the bulls wanted to unload at high profits and have the sport of seeing the fall, so they retained the message until the following day, when

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they explained aloud that the Argentine Republic, the great wheat mart of the world, had shipped her wheat to India.

"Her crops had yielded an overabundance and she had contracted with India to receive all her surplus, consequently our wheat would be a drug on the market there, which caused a great slump in the prices.

"I had bought at the inflated prices, but could get none to fill. Even the farmers held what they had and threw none on the market. I thought it was unprecedented, but afterwards knew it to be of frequent occurrence."

"But was there no recourse for you to get your money back?"

"Oh, no, no!" said the politician. "When you place your money in the hands of the brokers for investment, you pay your brokerage and are supposed to stand your profits and losses."

"It was an unlucky deal, surely," sympathized his companion. "But is there no way to get even?"

"I hope so. In order to retrieve my losses, I placed one thousand dollars to-day in the hands of my broker to help play me even. And I have just been quietly looking on or standing aloof to let them work the game," he replied.

Faith shuddered when she heard the last remark, for it must be that those precious twenties had gone into the hands of the unscrupulous wheat brokers.

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She knew they were reckless, heartless and merciless and that their dealings were purely gambling.

Homes were wrecked, families ruptured, suicides frequent, wage earners unable to procure bread for their families when the bellowing bulls buoyed the price of wheat beyond their limited purse—and it revealed to her the necessity of taking immediate action.

Love had not been able to restrain her tears during the conversation of the two men, for it was this same money god that had wrought such havoc in the home of her loved lady.

Faith soothingly put her arm around her sister, and together they tusseled through the crowd and sought a seat in a quiet corner, where they could rest and collect their jaded thoughts. And Love said:

"Faith, the old maxim, do you remember it, 'Money is the root of all evil'? has been fully demonstrated to us to-day, and the politician's avowal fully explains why Hate reigns as companion in his household at the exclusion of Love—where happiness had completed a most charming circle."

"My precious Love," said Faith, drawing her closer, until Love's head rested on Faith's shoulder, "those falling tears as they roll glistening from your eyes—the eyes of love—are like the unblemished, priceless pearls which are heaved from the bosom of the great mother ocean—so dainty and delicate, and denote purity of heart and purpose.

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"Please do not blur their beauty by dropping them on the altar of Hate, for Cupid still has many arrows in his quiver and thy pearls should make a circlet enchaining the hearts pierced by his gentle missive weapons.

"Love, dear, we must not tarry here, for matters of greater magnitude await us. We must rescue those innocent golden coins from the clutches of unworthy fate."

CHAPTER IX.

Days, months and even years have rolled by since Faith and Love's visit to the Chicago pit. Even Truth with her magnetic charm had quietly pursued her way, habitually making her abode with the silver-haired old lady, taking an interest in and looking after her belongings with the most considerate kindness.

The golden twenties, too, especially received her marked attention and strictest care as to their disbursement.

With kindly tact she had ingratiated herself into the old lady's confidence, and at the slightest indication of illness Truth was the first to detect it and was ever on the alert to render assistance, soothe and lull her to ease and rest. Thus Happiness, being the associate, was the most efficacious sovereign in the household and ruled it to the highest degree,

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thus filling the declining years of the lonely old lady with perfect peace and loving friendship.

Truth had written frequent consoling letters to Faith, and often had waited for no reply, as she knew that Faith was immersed in deep concern over the sacred commission entrusted to her charge. Vivaciously she wrote, which cheered Faith to renewed buoyancy in the researches of her disheartening task. One day, having crooned a subdued lullaby which acted as an anodyne to assuage restlessness and the dear old lady had succumbed to sleep conducive to health, Truth, as usual when exuberantly overflowing with joyful delight and love for quietude, sought her writing-desk and headed her tablet:

"My Dear Sister Faith: What felicity and ecstasy is this life of ours? The vocabulary's diction cannot answer the question or express the rapture. It is not as the gayety of the butterfly, for that is superficial, but as the very quiescence of bliss."

Suddenly the tones of the piano greeted her ear. "Ah, some one is playing," she said aloud, "I wonder who it can be," laying her pen down to listen.

"What is she playing? The touch, I should say, is that of a woman and the irregularity of composition a fantasia, but there is no melody in those jerky, jarring tones. Why, it is a perfect extravaganza!

"My, oh, my! How can such discordant runs originate from that grand piano forte which my

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dear old lady had so perfectly tuned last week? Well, I will not listen," and she wrote:

"You must forgive me if all my variant moods are inscribed here. An infraction has entered and is sounding the announcement from the keys of the piano forte, which has deprived me of my equilibrium and made me restless. In fact, all my abilities are disarranged.

"There was such peaceful satisfaction here with no dissenting events to write to you, my dear sister, to increase your anxiety. Oh, oh! how can I write when that playing fills every space and corner of this room, turning every atom of tranquility into turmoil?"

Throwing down her pen, she said: "Well, I am compelled to hearken."

"Compelled, did I say?" Is it possible to conceive Truth as being subservient to vile demonstrations and forced to yield her dominant courage to the unsavory and unreasonable acts of incongruous natures in a vacillating manner?

With determination she again wrote: "Oh, sister Faith, the usurper of our sweet and quiet monotony is making the piano ring with the most intense inharmonious and unmusical sounds which my ears greet with repugnance. Nevertheless, Truth will not be abased nor yet unstrung by its impetuous vibrations, but will graphically chronicle the dissonant sounds, even though it racks my soul, while I cannot restrain my ears from hearing it.

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“Still there is no cessation, and the diversity of tones render the translation as being full of disagreement, variance, dispute, quarrel and strife, sharp and dissonant. Why, the very furies of utter darkness must be dancing on those keys.

“And now a ‘mezzo,’ meaning sadness, is being played, and the emanations from that exquisite piano are capable of instilling me with pathetically mournful awe and conveying my very being into the land where in our dreams we wander among the graves of our deceased loved ones, but instead they are revolting and shock the nerves as being equivalent to the sound of a lost soul in the infernal regions—where supposition teaches—dwells the diabolical spirits of the once incarnate—who is hoarsely striving to gain breath for one more effort to ask for deliverance, although ages had been spent in crying for redemption.

“Ha! and now comes a ‘pianissimo,’ with intentions of being extremely ‘soft and soothing.’ But oh, horrors! it is as the last exertion with a wheezing sensation of that anguished soul, as he vainly and agonizingly struggles to make one more plea for mercy before reaching what is imparted to us as being the place of inevitable condemnation to everlasting punishment after the doom of death.

“And which, dear sister, can you believe is really more terrible than is the retribution of a stricken conscience—which must be the soul that has luxuriated in the excesses of infamy and crimes of the

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deepest gore, adroitly setting aside with blasphemy the commands of God and mandates of man, thus ignoring justice while treating it as an object of ridicule with the most exhaustless energy. Surely at this moment, dear sister, I feel that I am being overcome with agony, not that of a convicted conscience but a relentless, infernal spirit conveyed by the extravagant modulations of mockery from what should be the dulcet tones of that piano.

“And now comes the ‘cadenza!’ Jam, rattle, thrash, bang! I must close my letter and seek peace of mind or madness will conquer my power of volition.

“I wonder who can produce such sounds? Nobody but a virago surely. I have heard of persons performing with such heartiness that their souls appeared elevated to the heavenward precinct, but these demoniacal expressions carry one reluctantly into the depths of the Satanic regions. My nerves are all in a quiver. I must bid you adieu, for Truth’s communings should be sacred and void of all that is evil. Evidently our happy domicile is invaded, but with no kindred spirit of clemency.

“Your loving sister,

“TRUTH FAIRCHILD.”

“P. S.—I will add that you may not suffer undue anxiety. The dinner bell rang and I hurriedly adjusted my attire and hastened to my lady’s room, placed my filial kiss on her cheek, and, as she smil-

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ingly looked at me, I said, 'As I am an orphan I love you as a mother.'

"Completing her toilet, as usual I offered my arm for support, when a lady came bustling in, and, pushing me aside, said commandingly: 'This is my aunt and *I* will take her in to dinner!'

"Dazed I stood, but not in awe. Truth accepts no dread of contention which seeks to obliterate her nor being furiously forced aside by pertly interference when valor is at stake. Therefore, I pertinaciously escorted my aged invalid to her accustomed seat at the table.

"Kindly she introduced the newcomer, saying: 'My dear Truth, this is the daughter of my step-sister. We call her Jeallo, as being an abbreviation of the name Jealousy and easier to speak.'

"Scarcely acknowledging my presence, she quickly responded: 'And I have come to live with you my aunt, and see that you are well cared for.'

"Noticing the rebuff, the old lady responded quietly: 'But I shall always keep Truth, too.'

"Darting me an acrimonious look, Jeallo, like a base sycophant, in fawning tones, reminding me of the discordant notes of the piano, said: 'But aunt, you must love me best, and *I* will superintend your affairs while she attends to her servant duties.'

"I must confess that it required all my force of character to resist making a tart reply, and the deep-drawn sigh from the old lady entered the seat of my affection just in time to prevent my keen an-

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swer to such an imperious and implacably officious guest.

"Well, this has been a lengthy postscript. But what a change can be produced in a few short hours? In my opening address in this letter my life was redundant with the sunshine of love, and now I am transposed and tempest-tossed. But truth is the light which radiates the universe, being a benediction for the benefaction of its inhabitants; therefore, dear sister, I, Truth, must not falter or deviate from the duty and trustful care of my lonely old lady.

"Bless her, she has a few hundred left of the 'sacred coin,' but with care will be adequate for a good length of time. I know you will charge me to be wary when I tell you that, my writing-desk being near the door, which was open, I inadvertently overheard Jealousy tattling to the maid, who was tidying the room, that her aunt had fallen heir to an immense fortune left by her bachelor brother, who had recently died in distant parts, she being his only relative.

"This explains Jealousy's sudden infatuation for the lonely old lady, whose ears are now being filled with her deceitful, honeyed words.

"Oh, sister Faith, another terrible sorrow has come to us in connection with our holy sister Hope, who could be guilty of no crime. Yet all the periodicals are teeming with it, as you can see, therefore I need not write.

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"For comfort's sake I would rush to her, but my duty calls me not to jeopardize that dear old lady, and, as you know, Hope always has truth as her watchword, therefore right will certainly prevail. I know not when I can write again, but always believe me, as ever,

"Lovingly your sister,

"TRUTH FAIRCHILD."

CHAPTER X.

Faith had no ease of mind—waking or sleeping—after she had heard the politician's denouement in the Chicago pit. She spent her time assiduously the next morning visiting the brokers among whom, she presumed, the man in his crazed ambition for eminence had cast that precious gold. Readily they would manipulate it in speculations, no matter of what kind or how many fortunes of others were involved, providing the returns were maximum.

At last chance partially favored her. In the afternoon, having visited many offices, entering one she asked:

"Will you kindly inform me, as a matter of importance, if Langford, the politician, has at recent date deposited any money with you for investment?"

Replying, the broker said: "Yes, a small amount."

"Please pardon! I fancy some of the coins are marked. Can I see them?" asked Faith.

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Going into his private office he took from the safe a bag of money, saying: "My safe being strong and business rushing, I have not as yet deposited this in the bank, consequently we can inspect it."

They found ten marked twenties, which Faith readily recognized as being "Uncle's sacred coins."

At that moment a messenger boy entered with a note from the broker's wife, which he read, then counted two hundred dollars and handed them to the boy, remarking: "Money for my wife, who is much interested in her domestic duties."

Quickly Faith exclaimed: "Sir, will you please substitute these marked coins, which will then go into legitimate trade?"

Laughingly he acquiesced. Thanking him, she retired to the street, well pleased, yet anxious over the remaining amount.

Other offices in the jurisdiction were sought, even the bank in which the politician had made former deposits, but with no avail. Yet her faith did not falter or fluctuate, for was not this the substance of things not seen—and month after month rotated in ceaseless search.

Being satisfied that it remained no longer in the city's confines, she wended her way to New York, where in Wall Street she had the reliance that she would find it, as it is the great center and culminating point into which innumerable divarications with less pretentious dealings are merged, thus controlling vast millions in the brokerage system.

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Perceiving the enormous mass from which to liberate "uncle's unsophisticated gold," Faith reflected. It may be a life's undertaking, but the shepherd, when he had lost a lamb from his flock of ninety and nine, did not desist from his search in the mountain gorges and glades until he had found it.

As usual, having dropped into the Postoffice for her morning's mail, she received Truth's disturbing letter. Of late, having read only the newspaper articles which might be a benefit to her cause, immediately she bought some periodicals and found the information for which she searched to be very consternating and oppressive.

Her faculties seemed confounded that Hope, her angel sister and the very embodiment of a saint, was arrested and charged with murder. Faith, in her first delirium of frenzy, felt that she must fly to her relief.

"But," said she, "that would be the mode of confirming my belief in her guilt. "Ah, I will send Miss Joy, her close and most trusted friend, to keep her company. They are soul of one soul and impart mirth, gladness, pleasure and blissful happiness to the most afflicted, dejected and despondent natures.

"Truth does not write with her usual vivacity. She is overtaxed with care and her letter is perplexing, but I can render her no assistance. Besides, my own affairs are pressing and require my earnest

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attention, since I am convinced that no legal penalty can be measured out to my adorable and guilelessly conscientious sister Hope."

CHAPTER XI.

Miss Joy, having received Faith's letter, lost no time in going to the Bishop's house, and, a maid answering her ring, asked: "Will you kindly guide me to Miss Hope's room?"

In surprise, the maid answered: "Miss Hope has not been here since the murder."

"Murder?" exclaimed Miss Joy.

"Yes, the Bishop's murder. It was very sad, and he is now lying in state in the parlor."

Finding the maid not very communicative, and too stunned to ask more questions, Miss Joy departed, wondering at the strange turn of affairs. She had returned that morning from a lengthy visit with friends in the mountains and had missed the current news.

On her way to visit Hope her mind had been absorbed in figuring out the comprehension of Faith's enigmatical letter. Scarcely in a conscious manner she had noted the newsboys' shouting yell, "Extras, the Bishop's murder," not thinking that it was the dear and revered one with whom her loved friend, Hope, lived.

Buying a paper, the immense type of bold headlines glared the announcement and startling declara-

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tion that the Bishop had been shot by some one, who had also committed an act of burglary. There was a clue and the police were diligently on the search.

Hearing the report of a pistol, the special policeman had entered the house by means of his night-key, turned on the electricity, rushed through the hall into the library, where he found the Bishop lying on the floor, weltering in pools of blood.

It was a bewildering spectacle, but the sound of footsteps reached his ears, and he saw a figure—that of a woman with disheveled hair—fleeting through the room and out of a back door of the library, shutting it after her, and heard the noise of the street door as it mechanically closed with a bang.

He took cognizance that the safe door was open and contents missing. Turing on the police alarm brought them in haste, but no further clue was found and the deputies, having been relegated to every quarter of the city, met with no better success.

The wildest confusion reigned and everybody was in anxious anticipation of having the horrible problem solved. Why had Miss Hope Fairchild disappeared? Could it be she that had committed so dastardly a crime? was the oft-repeated question.

They were loth to suspect her, for she had won the confidence, respect and affection of all who had known her by exemplary habits, modest demeanor and Christian fervency.

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Never had she been known to be aggressive or encroach on the rights of others. As if by magic the wants of her friends were anticipated and her loved ones by adoption were legions. As that of her name—Hope—she imbued them with a preconceived idea and desire for good to come, with the full expectation of obtaining it, thereby allowing no dispiriting and discouraging elements to enter their daily life.

With a will, they exerted every endeavor to exonerate Miss Hope from the suspicion of having committed the deed. The strength of the entire police force, assisted by the citizens, worked with zeal to unravel the lowering, mysterious aspect.

Undetermined as to the proper course to pursue, after reading the account of the terrible tragedy, which acted as a dearth to her mirthful nature, Joy telegraphed to Faith for instructions, and received the answer:

“Go to her, Miss Joy. You are the stamen and support of Hope, and in this hour of her distress it is only you that can furnish her the aid to maintain her habitual striving with joyful expectations for priceless happiness.

“Every lineament and attitude of her existence portrays her spiritual, hopeful and heavenly longings. She—my doubly blessed sister Hope—has vanished, but I know not unworthily, though under the blemish of murderous guilt. Therefore you will find her, for Joy and Hope cannot be disjoined.”

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CHAPTER XII.

Reading Faith's dispatch, Joy said: "Well Hope—as her name signifies—is not mystical but distinguishingly characteristic and limitless. I will await his pleasure."

The Bishop's funeral was attended by an immense concourse of people, forming an imposing and solemn procession. Tears of real sorrowing dropped from numerous eyes when his spiritless body was lowered in the receptacle of solitude, where, after mouldering decay, mother earth would again claim her son.

Many were the conjectures as to the inhuman wretch that had stilled the heart of that righteous man and sanguinely desired a full penalty for the deed.

Though buried the Bishop ceased not to live in the hearts of his followers, who anxiously desired the capture of the guilty and egregious miscreant, whoever it might be.

Uneventful weeks revolved and now nothing was added to mark their course. With the alertness of so many, surely the evasion of arrest was miraculous.

Among the multitude Miss Joy's was the only face that was not doleful, and displayed gladness of heart.

She had no credence that Hope—depicted as being beautiful and sanctified—could condescend or

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stoop to plunder, much less deprive a human being of life. She had lapsed into quietude ; but as heaven eventually would reveal the faithful—so would Hope make known her motive.

One day the special policeman who had been first at the scene of tragedy was meditatively sauntering by the Bishop's residence when he looked up and met the glance of a young lady with sparkling eyes and exquisitely moulded form, which he knew only too well and recognized as being Miss Hope, holding a package in her hand.

The recognition being mutual, smilingly she exclaimed: "O, Mr. Policeman, see. I have it—Uncle's 'Sacred Money'—the golden twenties that read 'In God We Trust,' which sister Faith gave in my charge."

Truly the policeman was astonished by such audacity and unexpected meeting. In tones of exasperation he asked:

"Where did you get it? And how came it in your possession?"

Calmly she replied: "Why, the robber chieftain gave it to me."

"The robber chieftain?" said the policeman. "Where is he?"

Candidly she answered: "Why, Mr. Policeman, he asked me not to tell, but I did not promise."

Authoritatively he demanded: "But you must inform me."

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"Truly, Mr. Policeman, I believe I had better not," slowly she responded.

Her matter-of-fact opposition nonplussed him, and believing it only a hoax to shield herself said, "Come with me, Miss, and we will settle this business at once," and gaily she tripped by his side as though going to a circus.

Arriving at the head office the Chief ordered her placed in jail, and when attempting to take the parcel she tightened her grip, saying:

"No, no; do not take it away. This is Uncle's beautifully bright money and is sacred, for he but recently brought it into light from mother earth."

"What hocus-pocus game is she trying to play us? She is pretty sly," mentioned the special.

Emphatically the Chief said: "I demand you to deliver that parcel to the care of Justice until your fate is settled."

"Justice." Ah, that would satisfy sister Faith and be a gratification to Uncle, for his virgin gold was to pass into the hands of Justice, which, as having a due sense of benefits, would carefully invest it to comply with the rightful demands of the industrious and toilsome laborer," answered Hope, as she graciously handed to him the package.

"Miss Hope's actions are really incredible and mysterious," remarked the special to the chief, as he turned to escort her to jail.

The news of her imprisonment spread like wild-fire and very soon the streets were redounding the

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shrill echo of the voices of the news-boys calling, "Extra! The Bishop's murderer has been captured and placed behind the bars. Miss Hope was the guilty one. She took his life to rob him, for she was caught with the tell-tale money in her possession."

Hearing the cry of the urchins, Miss Joy hastened to the jail and was smilingly greeted by her loved friend Hope, as though no shadow of guilty suspicion was hanging over her.

With ardor Miss Joy clasped the hand extended through the bars and pressed it to her lips, and said: "Truly, this is Hope, whose face reflects not pain of mind or regretful sorrows, but happiness of the Holy Spirit, lovely and consecrated."

"Joy—Joy!" exclaimed Hope, "I knew you would come, for you are life of my life and never infesting."

"Ha, ha! Hope, my dearest of friends, these iron bars are no infringement to your look of hope that apprehends and delves in the Holy of Holies, and are no barrier spiritually between us, nor yet defrauding to our happiness, and I will confirm it by giving you this letter written, if I mistake not, by your sister Faith."

"Yes, and I will read it aloud to share my pleasure with you, dear Joy."

"*My dear Sister Hope:*

"Your sister Faith is communing with you in spirit and believes not in the possibility of your

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having committed the horrible crimes ascribed to you; otherwise she would forsake all else and hasten to your side. Miss Joy, your boon companion, telegraphed that she would go. Her vivacity will add strengthening vitality to your seemingly hopeless situation far more than the sympathizing words of your sisters Faith, Love, Truth and Charity, whose offices oscillate in the apartments of the discouraged and disconsolate, the sick, the dying, bereaved and mourning ones, and on the battle field flitting here and there among the groaning soldiers, feelingly bandaging their wounds and administering the balm of sympathy as an anodyne to soothe the pain, while they articulate a last message to mother, father, sisters and another—a sweetheart whose image is indelibly impressed on the tablet of memory, asking, as the final moment of life draws near, to impart word for word their most affectionate adieus to their loved ones, then lowering the ear to catch their last whispering sigh, “And tell them farewell, and oh, tell them to meet me in that more blissful place.”

“Thus it is better that Miss Joy, who lives not under the auspices of the knell of death but the hearthstone of ecstasy and abode of delight, be your blithesome companion while your sisters will rest assured that your loyalty to hope will be the emblem of your deliverance.

“‘Affectionately your sister,

“‘FAITH FAIRCHILD.’”

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CHAPTER XIII.

The Bishop had been too closely allied in the affections of his people for them to idly rest and permit justice to dally too long before arraigning the guilty one, and loudly the multitude denounced Miss Hope as being the criminal.

The fact was decided, that in seeking to cheat justice by the artifice of boldly returning, she had but acknowledged herself as being the perpetrator. Obviously she was the female figure the special saw fleeing through the library. No other person beside the Bishop knew the combination of the safe locks. He had taught her before taking his vacation in Europe, and had said: "Often the emergencies of travel terminate in unforeseen occurrences, and it might be necessary to have the contents of this safe—in case of my death—to be administered upon, and I know that I can trust you."

Solemnly she had answered: "Surely you can, dear Bishop, but please do not entertain such a thought. My prayers will ever be with you, asking that you be restored to us again safe and well."

That was a long time ago. The Bishop had completed his voyage and renewed his labors with increased vigor, in the midst of which he had been murdered and Miss Hope arrested, with convincing proof and convicting circumstances as being the culprit.

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It required reinforced police regulations to quell the excitement that raged almost to lynch law and made it apparent that proximate proceedings should be put into operation to enforce the trial.

But there were certain conformities of the law to be adhered to, and the ever-ready innumerable and inordinate technicalities that are noxiously resorted to only to asperse or befogg the law and retard justice, to contend with.

Then, again, it would not be equitable to espouse the cause too soon, for the prisoner should always have the benefit of a doubt and delay that a jury might be drawn from a not over-excited populace, for in the balance might hang a life or a life term imprisonment.

Evidently the legal lights of the law were cool and calculating when such a character as Miss Hope was in the scales, yet the good Bishop's life must be duly avenged, therefore, their act of judgment must be calm deliberate and with understanding.

But they were not adequate to solve the problem why Miss Hope retained such a passive demeanor and expression of the most unaffected and unalloyed happiness, while yet so inexorable in her delusive explanation of gaining possession of what she calls, "Uncle's Sacred Money." They indulged the question: "Is she guilty and resorts to this method as a manner of bluff or subterfuge?"

It had not occurred to them that she was the embodiment of her name, "Hope," which is im-

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mortal and receives its light from the infinite, thus conceding a glorious spiritual longing that transports one into the realms of ecstasy pertaining to the eternal heavenly life that can solely be entered by the pre-eminently good.

And Miss Joy's presence was still more puzzling, for she contributed constantly of the abundance of her nature until they were overflowing with mirthfulness.

Time vanished in rapid succession; then Hope's sister, Love, joined their circle. Then, truly, they basked in the beatitude which surpasseth all understanding. No combined force of the ungodly could render them destruction, for hope, love, joy, are the ruling powers that guard the labyrinths which leads to jeopardy.

CHAPTER XIV.

With more than usual enthusiasm, Joy greeted Love upon her arrival, and said: "O, Love, I cannot express my happiness that you have come, for you can confirm the veracity of Hope's version of "Uncle's Sacred Money," for which they will try to prove that she murdered the Bishop to procure."

"No, Joy," said Love, "I am sure I cannot. Faith told me of it, and also of the golden twenties which my lady had at the time of her marriage to the politician, but none of which I had seen."

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However, Joy being satisfied that Love could be of estimable value in the emergency of freeing her sister Hope from the terrible dilemma, stepped to the telephone and asked Attorney Goodman to come and interview with Hope's sister Love, who had just arrived.

The attorney hastened over and had a long talk with Love, and as he was taking his departure Joy intercepted him, and asked:

"Mr. Goodman, will not Love's testimony that Hope had never—from infancy—been a wrong-doer do much in clearing her of this guilt question?"

"I am afraid not, Miss Joy. Candidly, I will say that the evidence being clearly against her, this declaration will be of little value. The peculiar manner in which Miss Hope returned with what she called 'Uncle's Sacred Money' in her hand after being invisible for a lengthy period will disavow her innocence and proclaim her story a fabrication in the estimation of a jury. And unless we can establish a more strenuous method we cannot save her."

"Save her! Attorney Goodman, save her? What do you mean?" questioned Joy.

"Unless you insist, I had rather not answer just yet, as I want to make sure of my grounds first, and not disturb Miss Hope's peace of mind, and that of her friends, with undue anxiety and care," he answered.

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"But I do insist, Attorney Goodman. It is better that we be prepared for the worst."

"Well, Miss Joy—insanity, or at least a monomaniac—which I really believe to be true."

Joy said no more, but bade him goodbye, and immediately repaired to the grated window where Love was talking to Hope, as they were not permitted to visit on the inside of the cell, she having been incarcerated under the criminal charge of murder.

"Dear Hope," said Joy, "how ludicrous. Attorney Goodman informs me that, in his opinion, the only defense he can make in your favor to save you is the plea of insanity, which he believes to be true."

Noting Love's concerned look, Hope cheerfully rejoined: "My dear sister and friend, let not your hearts be troubled or filled with misgivings. Love, Joy and Hope being in trio can surmount every obstacle and triumph over evil. And now, Love, tell us of yourself. Sister Faith wrote that you were much cast down and discouraged."

Sweet, delicate and dainty Love was no stoic, but always ready to supply abundantly her sympathetic qualities to those who were afflicted or sought her good will, replied:

"I thought to save you from hearing the terminal of that harrowing episode of the politician and his wife.

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"It is perfectly accordant that you should tell us, dear Love. I was much troubled, but lost not 'hope' when I heard of your misfortune and their pitiable strife," said Hope, and Joy added: "Yes, please tell us, Love."

"Well," said Love, "Faith wrote to you the way 'Uncle's Sacred Money' was combatively contended between husband and wife, which was caused by true love not being responsive."

"Some months after Faith and I had visited their abode with such momentuous conclusion, I went again to make another effort to bring accord in the household. The lady had won my esteem by the earnest affection she had given to her husband in their early married life and the kindly consideration bestowed upon me—in fact, she was gentle to every one, and I grieved that she excluded me from her presence."

"As before, I was shown to her boudoir, where I found her alone. She did not rise to meet me, nor was I saluted with the kindest of greetings, neither did she graciously invite me to be seated. Nevertheless, I sat down, and for the want of something to say, I asked: 'Are you alone?'"

"She vouchsafed the answer: 'No, not quite. My companion Hate is always close, who at my call will appear.'"

"My dear girls, don't you see? I found my lady in no happier mood than when Faith and I were there. In fact, I doubt if she had ever enjoyed

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one moment in the companionship of Happiness since. We then believed that my lady had reached the climax of extreme change in manner and appearance, but were mistaken.

"Her face was now of a chalky pallor, wrinkled and drawn, and presented a weird look as a result of constant indulgence in intemperate derision, while her eyes, which were formerly of the mildest blue, gleamed from sunken sockets with dark rings underneath. And do not be shocked when I say that, if her compressed lips were to have lengthened to a smile it would have been but the mockery of a corpse.

"Oh, girls, does it not weary you to listen. It really gives me the heartache to think of it."

"Then please do not live it over again for our sakes," said Joy.

But Hope responded: "Yes, you have suffered too much already, but sometimes, sharing an overloaded care-stricken mind with conscientiously inclined loved ones, will infuse inherent power and vigor to a depressed spirit."

"You are right, dear sister, and I have wanted you to know the circumstances and the accurate account, that you might understand that Love is blameless, and it will relieve me greatly to conclude their story."

Hope said: "Love is blameless. True love cannot be otherwise. That is why our Heavenly Father sent His son from His kingdom to earth.

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He loved us—His people—and wished to redeem us from sin. Therefore, love is omnipotent. At your pleasure, we are ready to listen.”

“Well,” continued Love. “My lady was in the state of which should have been called holy motherhood, but a more unholy condition of affairs could not be supposed.

“She cursed both God and man. God, as investing her with devotional love until it had been quite idolatrous; and man, as being the covetous poltroon, who had won her love with the greatest professions of endurance only to gratify his evil propensity of preferment, power and lecherous animal instinct.”

Hope calmly interrupted: “Truly! A woman whose love is trampled upon becomes a demon, unless that love be in invisible unity with the sagaciousness of Wisdom, which uplifts it into the most zealous devotion of Godliness.”

“Yes,” continued Love, “had my lady remembered that ‘God is love,’ she might have been consoled, but her devotion was all of earth. I thought to vanquish the effluence of her reviling language by calling her attention to the near approach of her maternity, which should be the joyful culmination of matrimonial bliss.

“She hissed in my ears: ‘I scorn to become the mother of his child. He, who not only culpably and wrongfully wooed me into his loveless marriage, but traduces me to his friends, and entertains me, when here, with the harshest of language. Dur-

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ing my gestation, my whole soul craves for the kindest treatment and affectionate words.

"Why, since his election, for days he leaves me alone with my companion Hate, whom he installed here, while he visits the haunts that the laws of this great American Republic sanctions and provides for its dissolute men, which causes the demon to run riot through every pulsation of my arteries, setting my blood on fire, and Hate with her everlasting harping, heaps the fuel on the kindlings of the already scorching flames."

Asked Hope: "Sister Love, why did not you speak of the Great Eternal Being who could give balm to her wounded soul, which He is always ready to impart to the despairing ones?"

"Her mind, Hope, was too overwrought and gave no opportunity, but compelled me to be the listener and she said: 'Why, Miss Love, here is an article in this morning's paper, which I will read to you verbatim: "A dissolute woman arrested for alienating the affections of a married man. While the woman is legally accused of being a vagrant, the cause that led to her arrest is, that she persisted for some time past in alienating the affections of a married man from his family. The man's wife a few days ago appeared in court and tearfully told the story to the judge. She was advised to secure a warrant for the arrest of the woman, but refused to do so because she feared disgrace. The officers then took a hand in the matter

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and notified the woman that unless she left town she would be jailed. Yesterday the woman was still in town and a warrant was served on her and trial set.”’

“‘Now, Miss Love,’ said my lady, ‘who is the villain? Why did they not arrest the husband, too? He was the one who did the wrong by being unfaithful to his wife and forswearing his marriage vows, which are the foundation of every fundamental principle to keep the purity and virtue of our homes intact.

“‘Men are supposed to occupy the exalted position as being the protector and defender of woman’s honor. He is denominated as being the stronger sex—she the weaker, or frail.

“‘Miss Love, will you kindly inform me who but man by his feigned love and egotistical promises places woman in the ungodly ranks that are so unsavory to society which relegates them to the strictly located quarters of the “white slave” in the domains of the cities while he boldly strides as being the beguiled one, enticed by the woman’s sweet smiles, seductive eyes and alluring ways, and whom he secretly continues to visit as the one being on earth to him, but has not manhood enough to redeem from the haunts of unsanctified virtue.

“‘Miss Love,” she continued, ‘it is this unrighteousness which is uprooting the sanctity of our homes, blasting its happiness by divorces and causing race suicide.’

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“That virtuous wife feared disgrace because of her husband’s perfidy. That vagrant woman had not entered their home, was it justice to his wife that he should permit himself to be waylaid or seek companionship with the profligate woman, or might we call her, affinity, who well understood his frailty—usually ascribed as only belonging to the gentler sex—that of undignified disregard of his manhood’s honor.

“‘Ah, Miss Love, it is but the proving of his overrated strength of character, while the integrity of his manly courage has fallen to the unit limit, yes, and below par, and his name is registered on the great book of life under the head of guilty shame.

“‘Then, again, Miss Love, why is it that the man of millions may put away his wife—who had been his helpmate and lead a pure and stainless life from below the first rung of the ladder—to marry some beautiful, accomplished young girl, possibly one that is far above the average with gifted professional qualities and ambitious aspirations, whom he seeks as his affinity, as having supplanted the wife of his youth and mother of his children, who, by his own immoral acts, cannot arise and call him blessed father, but fill the air with curses of the day they were born of his blood, to brand them thus with marks contrary to the divine law?’

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“‘My lady, do you imagine the girl can love him as her husband?’ I asked.

“‘You ask me that question, Miss Love? Why she was lured by the marvelous gorgeousness of the wealth he promised to lay at her feet when she should have become an old man’s darling. Winter frosts and spring flowers are not kindred. After she has gained his riches there is no congeniality and the affection she bestows—no matter how else she may strive—is sphinx-like, while in her heart she truly despises him as he lavishly dispenses his gold for her every desire and worships at her shrine as that of a goddess, calling her ‘my beautiful angel love.’ Love, why he had none to give. He had outgrown it! Love belonged to his youth, pride now being his ruling passion, which might have been bestowed on an enchantingly beautiful Arabian steed.

“‘Ah, Miss Love, it is gross pride and self-esteem which he lays on the altar of the young, inexperienced girl’s life. Even affection’s garb could not be there, as he was bereft of that quality when he gave up his children, and when he untied the knot which bound him to the bride of his youth, love forsook him.

“‘Oh, Love, Love, Love! My politician husband wanted not that,’ in agony my lady cried, as she paced the floor and wrung her hands. ‘He seemed superior to all other men and was vehemently ardent in his wooing.

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“ ‘I deemed him most worthy, but found him a sham. He pierced my heart with a poisoned arrow from Cupid’s bow, which I trusted as being time-honored.

“ ‘After he had taken the marriage vows and left the sacred edifice, his abruptness was made most manifest as we entered the auto to bear us to our reception, which caused a chill to run through my heart where his warmest love had been paramount.

“ ‘But you know *all*, Miss Love. And now I am to become the mother of his child. It is revolting to my very being and my soul seems incarcerated. I scorned to seek a divorce, for it is vile. Oh, I had longed for a child of love, but this, my child and his, can be but a demon. Why, yes, it will be; for this is Hades!’ she shouted in a delirium of rage.

“Shocked beyond endurance, I made my exit, and I scarcely believe she knew when I left the room, as I could hear her still wailing and talking as I retreated to the door, nor do I think she was conscious all through her conversation that she had a listener, for the words came as though oft repeated.

“Sorrowfully I returned home and sought sister Faith, and repeated the result of my mission. She was deeply affected over it, and said:

“ ‘I pity the politician’s wife. She has been stung to the very depths of her soul, which has stupefied or rather stultified her better nature. The politician would have won my compassion had he have been the duped, but she alone now is the object of my

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commiseration. If the dear little life which is inspired by her has no occult power to lead her back to noble womanhood, I fear there is nothing can rescue her from the doom of contrition, while yet the sin was not hers.'

"I asked Faith who ought to be condemned for this state of affairs. Her answer was: 'My judgment has no real substance, value or importance and is destitute of force or efficiency, but, whosoever be the wronged person, there is One who is All Powerful that will deal full justice to the malefactor—if not now, in time to come.'

"I also asked Faith, as I could not apprehend it, why my lady should have such contempt for the beautiful and sanctified as well as blessed motherhood, and she answered:

" 'Why, sister Love, she—the wife—does not understand, or perhaps will not, that in tradition maternity is the culmination which places her on the highest pinnacle of glory and power. Woman's dominion is not simply to be a companion and helpmate of man. Hers is a greater mission. It is the governing power which dominates every station in life and has sovereignty over all mankind, be it for good or evil. To her belongs that paternal and prenatal potency which rules the character and condition of the life that has been given to her care to foster, which consists not only with the providing of food but nourishment to the mind with Divine grace—which means belonging to or proceeding from

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God—that shall rule the disposition and guide its future destiny.

“ ‘Who has been more exalted than “Mary,” the mother of the Best Man that ever was born, and who led the most devotional life to His Father in heaven, while yet the humblest, as His dwelling place was among the lowly? Although impoverished in raiment, His intellectual faculties—which were always Divinely Spiritual, pure and holy—were the nucleus which has mobilized the momentum of man into chosen ways designated as civilization. Yet this was not the extent of His magnitude of greatness, for He excelled in distinguishing it when He suffered the martyrdom death, that the proud sinner might be saved by redemption.’

“And, I said, ‘There are many people, Faith, who doubt the divinity of that good and Holy Man, Christ.’

“ ‘Be that as it may, Love,’ she answered, ‘none can gainsay that He has not been the Savior that during His life on earth gave and instituted the nucleus of religious faith to reclaim the world from wickedness, and His spirit still exists with increasing expansion.’

“ ‘And Mary, His mother, even though Her throes were in a stable and attended by those of lowly birth, prenataally imbued Him with her modesty, humility and life of deep devotion and meek consecration and reverence for the Great Father who had been His transmitter.

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“‘Notwithstanding this, dear sister Love,’ Faith continued, ‘the tendency of the old barbaric exhibitions of cruelty remains in many constitutional dispositions that have not accepted the instructions of that Good Man, as demonstrated by the politician and his wife.’ ”

“Well, Love,” interrupted Joy, “I do not wonder that you were filled with consternation and sorrow.”

“Assuredly it was indeed grievous to me,” answered Love, “and as Faith had thought best to continue her search and go to New York, I could not content myself without making another effort to reinstate love in my lady’s household, but concluded to let time make its softening influence with the mother-love for her little one and the politician cling to his child with a fatherly affection which might reinstate Cupid in the family circle. Therefore, three years had transpired before I again betook myself to their domicile.

“As before, I asked the maid to give my name to her mistress.

“‘My mistress is out,’ she replied.

“‘Then can I see the little boy?’

“‘Why, no. He is at the children’s hospital. He was suffering from bronchitis, so the nurse took him there,’ she said.

“‘Children’s hospital?’ I exclaimed in astonishment, ‘then probably my lady, or rather his mother, is with him?’

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“‘Indeed, she is not,’ quickly rejoined the maid. ‘Madam scarcely ever sees the child, and lets nurse have entire care and attention of him.’”

“Oh, girls, my heart was sad, my love dormant and my good intentions frustrated so that my speech forsook me, unless it was to say something ungainly. Therefore I took my leave, merely nodding a good-by.”

“How could a mother possibly send her little child to a hospital, to be cared for by entire strangers?” asked Hope.

“It seemed unmotherly and incredible to me; therefore I went to the hospital, and found it only too true. Then I inquired if the father came often to visit his child.

“‘Well, no,’ they said, ‘his office demands his time. Besides, he must keep public spirit enthused, that he might again be renominated, and could scarcely take his rest on the pillow at night.’”

“I retired from the hospital with this illustration in my mind: The heart which had rebelled against motherhood had not been reprieved by the little one, whose soft, clinging fingers ought to have brought the dew drops of love back into her heart.

“I was persistent and went again, but only saw the nurse, as the child was asleep, and she fully explained that the loathing which dwelt in the mother’s heart before the child’s birth was indelibly instilled into his life, therefore had no love for his mother.”

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"Ah! ah! ah!" mirthfully exclaimed Joy. "I am thankful that my mother instilled me with the disposition to laugh. Even when seeing crape on the door knob I smile, for some sweet spirit has departed through the portals of death and reached the realms where there is no jar, but all are singing happily sweet anthems of praise.

"My father often said, 'We named you Joy and knew that you would be an illustration of your name, for your mother was a living example of constant, merry happiness, and not a cloud of inharmonious ill-nature overshadowed her pathway.'"

"Then your father, too, must have been a most dutiful husband, for the reflection of his own congenial spirit was mirrored in the soul of your mother, who transferred it to you," said Love. "And, sister Hope, we will go now, as the turnkey is ready to close for the evening."

"Well, dear Love, you can tell us the sequel tomorrow. I have been much interested and sympathetic that the time has passed very rapidly," said Hope.

CHAPTER XV.

On the morrow, when Love and Joy had returned to the prison, they found Hope in readiness to receive them, looking as brightly cheerful as though waiting in the grated cell to accept a munificent recompense, instead of a trial for the inhuman act of killing a human being.

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She greeted them gayly, saying: "I am anxious to hear the remainder of the details of the politician's family, if Love is not too wearied in mind and body."

"No, sister, Love is not so easily jaded, else she would have collapsed entirely when the circumstances were so trying," answered Love, "and I never went to see them again.

"But they were so widely known I frequently heard of their numerous dissensions, also of the great popularity of the politician, whose society was sought at innumerable functions, as facilitating the advancement of the general political schemes which influenced their party, which was considered conducive to the business traffic of the country.

"But this was principally among men and his wife had no part in it, consequently was left to her own resources. He was too much interested in his pursuit for predominance and gain to know of her resorts or companions had he been so inclined or to concern himself about his invalid child.

"He had never recovered from the vexation of not being able to freely handle his wife's money, and the income from it was not adequate for his desires, neither was his office and position lucrative enough for his expenditures, which were prodigal.

"His wife marveled as time rolled on where her husband received the wherewithal to meet his very extravagant disbursements, which certainly involved many thousands of dollars more than his income.

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"The people had not interested themselves in the matter, knowing the extreme wealth of his wife, and, as being their leader, were unanimously conservative constituents to his party, giving no thought as to the consequences.

"But she—his wife—knew that eventually the climax would be reached, and, had she been so disposed, it would have been impossible for her to give him financial means to aid him to elucidate his enormous disbursements and relieve his embarrassment, for her father, by his usual sagacity, had prepared for this precipitous state of affairs as if by premonition, thus placing her in charge only of the income.

"She had confided to a friend: 'Had not my husband torn from my heart every branch, root and trace of love, I would willingly have shared a deficiency of resources with him, even to the last slice of bread.

"'But now I am like unto the grand old oak tree that thrived luxuriantly, extending its branches to protect the delicate little violet and its surrounding verdure from the scorching rays of the zenith sun with a most affectionate nature, then dropping its foliage to still further succor the little blossom by screening its roots from the wintry blast. Then a fire raged through and consumed the munificent offering, penetrating even to the root of the tree, where it continued to burn until it reached the trunk of that forest queen, nor did the conflagration cease until the heart of the tree had been devoured.

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"Nevertheless, it still stood majestically among its kind, yearly resuming its verdant adornment without having had its brilliant hue effaced; yet when the great vitality that had been sustained by the sap issuing from the porous heart's center, which had sent it seeping through its immense material substance even into the smallest twig, had been robbed of its succulence by the drying qualities of the air being inhaled through the heart's passage, its doom became apparent and in time resulted in the withering of that staunch royalty of the forest.

"'But not as that queen will I languish and pass away, for I still have the fire of mistaken will-o'-the-wisp love burning within me, which breeds vengeance.'

"Quietly she kept in touch with the unrestrained lavishness of her husband's daily consuming of finances, and was sure that disaster could not be far distant.

"Believing the time had arrived to seek revenge, she placed detectives to puzzle over the questionable outlay. Very cautiously they began proceedings. The politician had become less prudent in his manipulations, as there had been no interrogations. Then, being more confident, he boldly plunged into the wildest speculations, consequently the sleuths had an open field and soon uncovered the fact that he had been guilty of gross malfeasance of office, which without doubt would land him in the State

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prison, where he would be entertained as a guest at Uncle Sam's functions.

"The populace that had doted upon him were highly enraged, and urged that every wheel of the law be put in motion to settle him with as much speed as possible in the government's very secluded and exclusive hostelry—as none can become residents without the sanction of the highest tribunals of the country.

"But this was not the building for which the politician had craved and aspired. The White House had been his goal, but when he had appropriated his wife's money and gallingly upbraided her, he had soldered the first link so that the hinges of that building would be consumed by rust without having responded to his opening touch, thus showing that his conscience had been captured by his transgressions."

"How shocking," said Hope, but Joy, who was more interested as to the future of the wife, asked:

"What became of his wife?"

"Well," said Love, "his wife was not idle, yet she did not indulge in dissolute way or disreputable companionship. In her youth she had been reared in a plain manner and nurtured with extreme care and simple fashions, utterly regardless of the ostentations usually the result of wealth.

"Her father began life as a shepherd and had exercised humane, watchful attention to his flock, often feeding the delicate little lambs warm milk and

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cuddling them in a cozy corner by his own chimney fire.

"This compassionate disposition evinced the nobleness of his character, which followed him through life. He invested his earnings in lands of the Western States, and by the time he was twenty-five years of age he had accumulated many acreages, which rapidly increased to thousands.

"At that age he married a modest village maiden, who had received her education at the academy of her native town. He sold homesteads to the influx of settlers. Railroads diversified his land, interspersing great cities and towns here and there. Wealth rolled in, filling his chests overflowing with wealth until it was reckoned by the millions, the fact of which he really was at a loss to know the number. Their little daughter had never known the life of dissident discord. Discontent could not exist in their affectionate and harmonious lives. Consequently the deluding marriage, which dethroned the happy young girl of her idolatrous love, quite unhinged her mind, turning her into a maniac demon, which, with the aid of her companion, Hate, eradicated every atom of affection that might have remained and lived only to underplot a retaliating revenge.

"Her parents were grief-stricken at her insane tact. They begged for the custody of the feeble little child, that it might not be wielded to the entire care of strangers, but with her mania for the pur-

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suance of aversion to the delicate boy, their persuasion and advice was at variance. Yet they secretly gave it their watchful care, for well they knew their little grandchild could never grow up to years of discretion."

"Is it still living?" asked Hope.

"No," said Love, "while the father's case was being tried it died and was quietly buried, which acted more as an emolient to my lady's overburdened mind and feelings than anything else had done.

"The hard and determinedly vicious look forsook her face and softened considerably into the charm of her girlhood. The distraught and wild passion which had distorted her sweet nature subsided into subdued and passive melancholy, which was perplexing to her parents.

"The courts had granted her a decree of divorce, she not having to appear, as her husband was a convicted felon and awaiting some technical decision before being established in his permanent headquarters.

"Her mother became her constant attendant, thus depriving my lady of the odious company of Hate. And, thinking to arouse her from her dejected and lethargic state, her parents opened their doors to conventional society as they never had done before, and it was not long before they noted a change in her demeanor, but were much grieved as she slowly recuperated that she still retained the ambitious spirit of revenge which had seemed cancelled.

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"Cold-bloodedly and without mirth she entered into the scenes of the most strenuous gayeties. Being a daughter of wealth, her hand was frequently sought in marriage, to which her only answer was a scornful laugh of derision. And if they accompanied their suit with a declaration of love, her sarcasm knew no limit of language.

"At last a prince came a-wooing. Together they attended the seclusive amusements which the leaders of the 400 provided for them and were the cynosure of all eyes.

"To obtain material to satisfy her vengeful spirit she had resorted to coquetry and conquest, but first she had used every endeavor to regain, by healthful, open-air, disciplining exercise, the sprightly, elastic step and robust constitution of former years, and it came, bringing a roseate hue to her complexion and a frolicsome brilliancy to the eyes, which now were only lacking the soulful look, which was replaced by contempt.

"The problem of marriage she had obliterated entirely from her mode of procedure, but when the prince came and candidly confessed that it was not love he sought but wanted a princess who was possessed of great wealth to restore his depleted castles to their former splendor and wonted glory, she was nonplused.

"His undisguised, rare and remarkable candor won her as nothing else could, and with fairness related her own life to him. And he expressed his

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sympathy by asking her hand in marriage, saying that, although wealth was his objective point, her radiant beauty had captured his sensibilities and only lacked her consent to pay her homage as his princess.

"She had considered herself as adamant, but with softened tones she referred him to her father, but with a caution to say that love had no part in the matter of marriage.

"It had not been her father's ambition to have royal honors bestowed upon his daughter and only child, but the sad consequences of her former marriage made him more passive, and, in consultation, coincided with her mother's views, which might prove to be a blessing after all, for she (their daughter) would be surrounded by environments which would be an entire change.

"My lady made one request. The wedding should not be celebrated on an elaborate scale, but quiet and simple.

Thus it was that on the very day her politician husband was incarcerated in his penitentiary home and donned his apparel of stripes for penal servitude, she was robed in wedding garments and became a princess."

Hope said: "What a terrible termination of what should or ought to have been the most loving and conjugal happiness."

Joy, with spirit, said: "Surely she considered her revenge complete. But I cannot see where happiness is triumphant when she has really married for a title,

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just to have the high-sounding word of princess prefixed to her name."

"Yes," said Love, "I cannot account for it, but it does seem strange that our beautiful and prosperous 'America, the land of the free,' has become so popular as an incubator—brooded by her fabulous wealth—for turning out her young, lovely and talented daughters, whose only requisite is the laurel crown to make them regal, to again resume the weighty ones worn by titled monarchs from which our forefathers gallantly fought and bled, and the slain consigned to early graves to absolve them from."

Hope, with luminous features, said: "But, my dear ones, while absorbed gravely in this matter, do not forget that there is a more superior one than any mentioned—which is the crown of righteousness that adorns the God-head, the splendor of which cannot be surpassed.

"It is embellished with stones, which represent every good and worthy act performed on the journey of life, and duplicated to us when the approval of our past record shall have been established. We can wear it in our old age to our honor and will grace us as we lie down to rest in the sleep of death."

With tears in her eyes, Love said: "Truly, truly, sister Hope, that must be the coronet which has sustained you through your unfortunate tribulations. Oh, if my lady could have been gifted with such a diadem she might not have experienced such deep

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grief nor have had it arrested from her by the machinations which originate from Satan. Nevertheless, her trials were as nothing compared with yours, therefore the approval from on high must have been found wanting that she did not gain that glorious crown."

CHAPTER XVI.

The conversation of the previous day had left a deep impression in the mind of Miss Joy, and the following morning, when she joined the sisters at the jail, she asked:

"Do you believe, Hope, that it is man's nature to transgress the laws of God?"

"Sister Faith and I have discussed that question, Joy, and decided that they were created divinely pure," said Hope, "but as a matter of fact a terrible blight may have been impressed on their dispositions as a result of prenatal ignorance thus shaping various forms of character. Improper training in childhood, which warps the mind, thus making it an easy prey to adopt the unfit laws which have reversed the old Golden Rule, 'Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you,' too, may have its evil effects."

"It is no wonder," said Love, "that my poor little Cupid, who is the god of love and the quintessence of that rule and dominant spirit of true earthly happiness, cannot be the hero and occupy the highest

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seat royally in humanity's realm, environed by the staunch devotees of true worth, instead of revolting, deceptive and fawning love in all its misleading forms which are the insignia that leads the soul into corruption or Hades."

"But I cannot understand," said Joy, "why should they suffer the pangs of that place as though brimstone fire was burning their souls—as did my lady—while in this life. It is possible that they may have escaped punishment entirely, but the scourge will be doubly great should they also suffer the everlasting condemnation beyond the grave."

"It is my belief, my sweet Joy," said Hope, "that it is not the wisdom of God that punishment should be duly meted out. In His great love and generosity man was created after His own image, but giving unto him a will to exercise his own pleasure, with the expectation that he would engross the prescribed ways and laws of the holy commandments. But man accepted, rather, a tumultuous life, filled with unrestrained behavior, thus creating not the love of God for His benefactions but originating his own volition of downfall by making laws which are polluting to the ancestral race.

"Especially will I speak of the law-sanctioned allowance of sensual, seductive virtue, which is permitted to run riot seditiously at will, leaving its virus to be inoculated in the future destiny of — what should be—our enlightened race.

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"The enumeration of the established usages of false doctrine would be interminable. But, girls, there is one that is particularly heinous and revolting. Nothing could be more defamatory than that men should luxuriously live and prosper by the profits derived from the white slave.

"There are legions of these demons of Hades, and they gather myriads of our gallant men and youths and initiate them to their doom among the gilded satellites of Satan. Why, in barbarism such licentiousness is not tolerated. Often the female is stoned or put to death, while their brave is boycotted or meets a like fate; which destiny, surely, can be no worse than is our capital punishment—which is murder coolly sanctioned—or our war, that is wholesale slaughter."

"My dear sister Hope," cautioned Joy, "do not let your mind dwell on this subject, lest you lose hope. 'And the hope of the righteous shall be gladness, but the expectations of the wicked shall perish.'"

CHAPTER XVII.

When Attorney Goodman had solicited her confidence, he said: "Miss Hope, you may talk to no one but me, but I want and must have your full confession."

She had answered, "Well, attorney, it is not necessary, as I rescued the 'sacred money' and brought it back safely."

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"But Miss Hope," he asserted, "the community is ready to vouch for your distinguishing qualities, estimate of character, reputation and habitual veracity prior to the tragic event of the Bishop's death, but not for this strange version, which has the appearance of random. It would be inexplicable and have no weight with the jury, and I do not wish to discourage you, but deem it best that you should understand that I fear the worst.

"I believe if you still remain obdurate that my only alternative will be to place you in the witness-chair, which truly is a very unusual course. By that method we could reveal the truth or determine your sanity, but even then I am afraid the result will be hazardous."

Hope, smiling tranquilly, replied: "Thank you, Attorney Goodman. My only anguish is that you are worried unnecessarily, therefore I will comply to your request to the degree requisite. My vindication rests with the court of heaven, the decision of which is always with the Holy of Holies. I have no reverential awe, for it is the guilty that have painful emotions excited by the expectation of evil."

It is needless to say that Attorney Goodman conscientiously believed her insane. When he had received the telephone message from Miss Joy to repair to the jail to confer with Miss Hope, he had expected to find her in tears and spiritless, therefore stood in amazement when she wore not gloom, which is the cloud from where the tear drops issue, but

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greeted him cheerfully, while her face was encircled by the radiant grandeur of a smile, which was the emblem bow of promise for celestial honors.

Attorney Goodman, being a Christian man who practiced the precepts which he frequently announced as being the foundation of fair dealing with others and guidance to success in special need, was heartily sympathetic with this extraordinary—here he was at a loss what word to use, as he could not satisfy his mind to call it tact not yet diplomacy, but might he analyze it as angelic?—no that would not do, for angels do not rob or murder. Criminal—oh, not that either, for who could look at her, so full of trustful hope—beautiful, luminous hope—and believe it? Yes, I have it now—dementia—which denotes loss of mental power. Therefore, he bowed his head for a moment and communed to the Invisible, All-Powerful Judge to vouchsafe His aid in liberating this seemingly spiritual young lady and make it manifest that she had no complicity or understanding in the deed of murdering the holy Bishop.

As he lifted his head with a glance at Hope, he thought "How can she with that look of adoration be classed as being the criminal? And it is only He—the Almighty God—that can overthrow the preponderance of evidence against her.

"But how?" was the question which continually invaded his mind long after he had written down at her diction an almost incredible statement as to

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the robber chieftain giving her the money and the directions where to find him, which said to follow one of the many cattle trails beyond the city to the extreme limit, which he considered a hallucination.

He placed a copy of his statement in the hands of his own special detective, instructing him to use his utmost ability to find the rendezvous of the robbers' chieftain, which would do much to render her guiltless.

"But a jury would ask point blank "why she had been there?" said the special attorney, and said he, "At any rate, capture the robber chieftain—if possible—at all hazards, which the populace believes to be a myth."

"Huh, sir, I will do my best," said the detective, as he hastened to depart. Explicitly following the written directions, he went up this street and down that, through intricate alleys and by-streets, until he reached what might have been an obscure part of the city.

"Huh! Surely these instructions seem intentionally misleading, but the young mademoiselle shall not abash me."

Reaching the extreme suburbs, which reflected poverty, nevertheless, had never been known as being lawless, the scattering shacks had more the appearance of being sleeping places after the day's labor was completed rather than abiding homes.

He continued to the limits, where he was at a loss to designate the trail mentioned, but choosing

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the one most frequented he ventured on, presuming that stock from the dairymen's stalls had traversed it, for soon it diverged into various ways among the picturesque little hills abounding. He followed several until they became only faint outlines, each time having to retrace his footsteps. Good naturedly, he said: "Huh! These byways were made by the domesticated cows honestly searching for food whereby they may serve lacteous fluid to the city's inhabitants.

"Well, here is one more," and he kept in its course, when suddenly he was aware that it came to an abrupt terminal at the edge of a deep water-washed gully.

"Huh! I won't be abashed," said he. "I'll look at the writing: 'Follow the cattle trails beyond the city to the extreme limit,'" he read aloud. "Huh," said he, "haven't I followed them all, and they migrated into nothing, excepting this one, which has turned out to be a buncoe. Huh! and that is what Miss Hope has done—buncoed Attorney Goodman."

Filled with disappointment, he inferred that his quest was at an end and with chagrin said: "Huh! Jehu, the pesky robbers made an exit somewhere, and I'll be blamed if I go back and not accomplish my purpose. Huh! I'll just rack my brain a little more over this difficult situation. Huh! That ditch is pretty deep. Huh! Jehu! If this trail don't keep right on down the side in sort of an

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incline fashion to the very bottom unless my eyes are deceiving me."

"Jehu! Huh! I'll take a run down the track and see where it leads. There is no grass there, so the cattle did not make it, that is certain. Huh! But I am in for it now and will follow to the extreme limit, and sure as I live more than one has trampled here, and many times, too. Huh! And her little feet could not have made such a showing, and the tracks still keep square down the old water run.

"Huh! What does it mean? Well, Jehu, my curiosity is ahead of me now, and I hope the end will not be bitter."

On and on he went, perhaps for miles, and worn with fatigue he felt that he must give up. Still, the singularity of this trail urged him on, but ahead he saw a hill that turned the course, which he felt that he must inspect, for it might reveal a clue to what he sought.

"It is queer Miss Hope did not definitely describe this unusual and delusive trail if she passed over it," he murmured, as he sat down to rest and partook bountifully of his abundant supply of refreshments.

"Huh! Jehu! Heh!" he exclaimed as he arose. "This nourishment to my body gives added strength and increased vigor so that I now can explore this ditch to the end. It must have been one of Nature's freaks, for it shows that, perhaps for ages, the

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storms have sent a generous supply of water coursing its way through this, which at first must have been a very small crevice."

Nothing daunted, he resumed his journey. "After I reach the hill," he reflected, "if nothing more of consequence comes to view, I will retrace my steps, that I may arrive at Attorney Goodman's office before night comes on. But, huh! Jehu! I cannot understand this much trodden trail, and the channel here is widening as it turns to the left. Huh! I must go ahead and see if there is anything very confounding at the terminus of this wonderful old gully.

"Huh! Jehu! I can understand the gully, but not this astonishing trail. Huh! I see now! It empties in that gulch at the intersection of those two hills, one of which this depth had excluded from my view.

"Jehu! Huh! I cannot return now, for the footpads continue through this gulch, so there must be some kind of a Jehu of a junket in these quarters somewhere, and if Miss Hope had the audacity to ransack such a thoroughfare as this she had a reason for doing so, and I am going to investigate it to the very core. Huh! Jehu! I am, you know."

He had walked briskly as his absorbed mind expressed itself with interspersed ejaculations, and soon he was rewarded by a change of scene as he passed from between the two hills.

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"Huh! Jehu! Huh! If this course had not have made a complete turn it would have swamped that pretty little knoll over there, you may call me by some other name besides Detective Jere Davis, so help me Jehu.

"Je-mima! Huh! This trail leaves this particular gulch and begins to climb up toward that knoll, so I will out of this, too! Well, Jehu! Huh! I wonder who is distraught now?" he exclaimed as he stooped down and picked up a lady's slipper at the top where the trail made its exit from the deep gulch. "Could it be that Miss Hope had lost it?

"Yes! Jehu! Huh! I remember now that the special policeman mentioned that she wore a mismatched slipper on her return. Some way, I am sorry I found it. But, huh! Jehu! I can't stop now to think or inquire into the whys and wherefores of it, now that I have a decided clue.

"But je-mima! Huh! Jehu! What do I perceive there, on the very top of that knoll? A cottage, as I live! Jehu! Huh! With in a fine cluster of shade trees, too?

"I will precisely ascend; perhaps a still greater surprise awaits me. Huh!

"Huh! Je-mima! Jehu! It is a little, old-fashioned cottage almost hidden from view by the unrestrained luxurious growth of shrubbery which quite envelops it. Huh! If tenanted, it shows they must have been mighty shiftless. Huh! Jehu!

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"Originally it was painted white with green window blinds. And here is a dilapidated, quaint old picket fence, which looks as though it would tumble down at the least provocation. Huh!

"Jehu! This gate swings all right. It has one good hinge, but the other has been substituted by a piece of leather of recent application, as the nails are yet bright and not rusty. Huh!"

Every thought of weariness had vanished at this discovery, and with agility he proceeded to look over the premises. Passing up the walk he noticed that the grass was worn by late date footsteps. Arriving at the door he raised the voluminous old knocker and as it fell the sound echoed loudly in clanging tones, reverberating the accents from un-hung walls, drapeless windows and uncovered floors.

Patiently he listened for approaching footsteps, but at the sound of none he again gave the knocker a more forceful strike, saying:

"Huh! That ought to fetch them if near, or awaken if sleeping. This must be the place where the robbers roosted, and they do their work at night and close their eyes by day. Huh!

"But, huh! Jehu! They must have flitted when they sent her back with that money and warned her not to tell. Huh!"

Meditating thus, he turned to survey the surroundings, which increased his enthusiasm as his eyes took in the remarkable little landscape. There

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were two or three acres of most fertile and tillable soil with a brook gliding through the plot while it coquettishly trickled a goo-goo, gurgling sound as it briskly wended its way toward the beautiful hills and stealthily crept at the base between the two higher ones.

"Huh! Jehu! A prettier little nook could not be found," he exclaimed, as he tried the door, which responded to his touch.

"Huh! The key is in the lock on the inside, showing a hasty retreat by the residents, or possibly carelessness, or expecting a speedy return, which they have failed to do. Huh!

"Well, jehu! Huh! At any rate, I will press my investigations and in the meantime keep a sharp lookout for any liable intruder that might be lurking around while I reconnoiter."

Sauntering through a small hall and into the other rooms, he said: "Huh! Four rooms and a hall. It has been a nice little cottage, all right. Huh! Here is a door. I suppose, another bedroom, and—Huh! Jehu! If I do not find more in this one than the trampings of dirty feet, and where mice have held their revelrous fandangoes there will not be much to let my language flow over.

"Well, je-mima! Jehu! It is not often one finds a pile of clean, bright straw heaped up as though for a bed, easily throwing blankets over for coverings.

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"Huh! And this looks like housekeeping, with this old barrel turned upside down, with a newspaper for a table cloth and a rickety old chair beside it. Huh! Jehu! They had things to eat, too, for here are the remnants of a delicate and appetizing lunch. Sardines, quail on toast, and cocoa, which must be stale, having stood in that tin cup so long. Huh! Not a bad meal, though, and denotes being prepared for a lady of refinement, as a masculine would have gulped it all down at a morsel, and not nibbled and sipped at it in that dainty fashion. Huh!

"Well! Jehu! Huh! Queer things do happen in this world, which look surprising and suspicious as well. But, huh! I am glad there is no one around to hear me say so, as I did set a mighty store by that girl—Miss Hope. Her conscience must have pricked her, for she had not much of an appetite, and I reckon her mind was absorbed in inventing a plan to clear her actions. Huh! Jehu! What is that on the straw? A hairpin, so bless me! Huh! Je-mima! Jehu! A hairpin to put with the slippers! Huh! I wonder what next? Can she really be guilty?" he asked, as a shudder passed over him.

"Huh! Jehu! I should heartily regret to find her so, she having been such a beautiful and Christian young lady.

"Well, well! Huh! Jehu! Huh! One can never tell what deviltry is in the heart while the

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angel looks through the eyes, and she was a mighty sweet angel, too. Huh!

"Jehu! If I am moonstruck like this my underpinning will give out, too, so I will haste away and see if there is anything else. Huh! Yes, there is," he exclaimed, as he espied behind the chair a little white handkerchief, and with scarlet face and bulging eyes he clutched the dainty fabric and held it up by the two corners with both hands.

"Huh! Jehu! Great Scott! Jemima! Here is the initial "H"—for Hope—I wish I had not found it, or any of these other articles. Huh! I attended the Bishop's church and frequently his reunions, and saw her there, and always as one of the promoters. Huh! Surely since she is guilty, I have lost faith in all women.

"And Jehu! Jemima! Attorney Goodman cannot save her now by proving her crazy. Huh! Jehu! I am tempted to hide this in my pocket. Huh! Jehu! What would the knowing ones say if they knew that I—Jere Davis, the detective of felonies, whose heart should be strong—had moistened eyes as he twirled this tiny bit of linen between the fore finger and thumbs of his two big hands.

"Huh! The jury shall not convict her with this trifle. And, Jehu! Bless me, I will make way with all these other little death-dealing tell-tales, too. Huh! Well, I can eat the lunch and toss the

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straw up in the corner as though it had lain there for years in this dry and pure atmosphere.

"Huh! Then, as for the barrel, that is easily rolled down the slope, while the chair is sent flying through that window into the old shed. Huh! No one will be the wiser and then Miss Hope will have no convincing and inevitable proofs to establish her guilt.

"Huh! Why, Jehu! What am I talking about? Surely, too, then I would be a criminal! Jere Davis, the time-honored and always responsible employee of trust, become an abettor to crime? Jehu! Huh! No, that won't do.

"But, huh! That saintly face of Miss Hope's comes in between me and my duty. Huh! What if she is innocent, and I should take these rattle-traps and condemn her? Huh! I wonder what that good and religiously wise old Bishop would have advised me to do?

"He used to repeat the 14th verse of the XXXIV Chapter of Psalms frequently to us as a sort of maxim, he said, to guide us through life, in our principles. Huh! So I will just say it over now as my regulator at this very moment: 'Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.' Huh! I am more confounded than ever.

"Huh! If I knew which road evil took, Jehu! I would take the other, which would be sure to be the one Miss Hope had chosen, and hunt up peace, to help that young lady to pursue it.

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"But, huh! Jemima! If I ran after her with these blamed, pesky little articles in my possession they would appropriate them—Huh! and hang her sure. Huh! Blessed if I know what to do.

"Huh! The good Bishop would quote more scripture and abide by it. But he had the Bible on the end of his tongue, but mine is too thick to spit it out, even if I had it there. Huh! But I will have to get at it in some manner to find out what to do in this unusual case.

"Huh! Let me think. Yes, I am certain that the Bishop gave us the IV chapter of Psalms, or where it said: 'Offer the sacrifices of righteousness and put your trust in the Lord.'

"Huh! Jemima! And that is JUST what I will do. These little sacrifices I will turn over to Attorney Goodman and then drop the rest to the Lord."

Thereupon, having settled the intricate question satisfactorily in his mind he continued his investigations. Unlatching the kitchen door he stepped out on a small porch and said, as he looked over the banister:

"Huh! Jehu! Huh! This is not quite perpendicular, but a more abruptly oblique view of this knoll than the gentle slope in front. Huh! There is a path. There are so many with such astonishing terminals I will take a turn down this one, too. Huh! Here is a fine spring. One always clashes upon the unexpected without a moment's warning. Jehu! Come to think of it I ought to have known

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there was a fountain at the head to supply that little brooklet with swift running water to wash the feet of those two modest and unassuming hills.

"Huh! No one but the Bishop's God would have thought of making this enchanting knoll into such an excellent canopy to shelter the enormous reservoir which must supply that spring with its crystal water."

Dreamily he sat down and gazed into the depths of Nature's fluid, which had been walled with stones in circular form.

"Huh! This is entrancing to watch that crystalline fluid as it comes gushing, gurgling and forcing its twinkling bubbles through that small aperture in the earth seeking the light of day, as though being tired of its restraining quarters and ambitious for activity.

"Huh! And there is no other beverage more delicious to quaff," he continued to soliloquize, as he stooped and drank copiously from an old tin cup. "Huh! And bestow such energy through every nerve of the system.

"Huh! This is a nice, mossy rock on which to recline, therefore, I will rest, as I cannot reach home tonight, besides, this place has sort of a charming, sanctified attraction to me.

"My calling—being that of a detective—plunges me in a vortex of transgressions, filled from the slums where exists the sluggard and indulgencies in the most nefarious of crimes. Therefore—huh!

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it seems quite like a manner of salvation to repose quietly in this hallowed place.

"Huh! That pearly water issuing forth from its receptacle in purity—like mankind born free from sin—wends its way and glides over Nature's diversified, uniting with a rill here, a brooklet there, then merging into a river yonder, gathering quantities of the most murky slime from the abominable pestilential sources, becomes contaminated to the highest degree. Huh! And an ample draught, as I have just drank, would inflict a morbid condition to the body and engender the most dangerous of diseases.

"But it is not beyond redemption, for it glides into the arms of a river which hurriedly rushes it to its parent Ocean, who receives it in her mighty motherly embrace and rocks and rolls in the transparent, absolving and most purifying of her fluids until not a vestige of its diseased state is apparent.

"Then the awe of resurrection is made manifest—the fleecy, filmy cloud flits from the rising atmospheric fluid resembling the diaphanous covering of a veil, and again floats off in ardent aspiration for virtual valor."

Thus he sat philosophizing and communing with nature until shadowy evening drew near and Luna's full, beaming face appeared straining her eyes eagerly to catch a peep at Old Sol, who had ungalantly dodged behind the horizon.

"Huh! Old Sol is a foxy old gent. Huh! Per-

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haps not more than I, for the longer I dilly-dally with these trinkets—which they will style corroborating proof—will extend the time for Miss Hope to face that horrible trial.

“Huh! Jemima! I suppose it will always remain a mystery why she left this sylvan retreat to return to what she must have known to be a prison cell, merrily bringing ‘Uncle’s Sacred Money,’ with not a mark of anxiety or perverse moral principle on her placid angelic features.

“Huh! Jemima! Why did she not stay? Huh! After all, her stay was quite lengthy, and it was a miracle that she escaped or was allowed to get her liberty. Huh! Nobody but Miss Hope, with her saintly ways, could have accomplished it, let alone procuring that money from that dare-devil robber chieftain.

“Huh! Jehu! I will turn in now and tomorrow I will deliver all these sacrifices to Attorney Goodman as I agreed. Huh! The Bishop, in his life, would have patted my shoulder, saying: ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant.’”

CHAPTER XVIII.

“So, ho! Hidalgo. Is it thus you obey the commands of your chieftain? Unhand thy victim!”

“I beg your pardon, my noble chief, but this ‘son of a gun’ was on the point of wiping out my career by depriving me of my vital bearings, and if I

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loosen my grip he will put that iron of his in motion. Then, 'la-chunk' tumbles over Hidalgo kissing this confounded alkali."

"For shame! You pledged your word—and that implies your honor—that you would not again deluge your blade with human blood. I charged you that if you valued me as your chieftain not to do so, and here I find you with your dagger raised. Had I not arrived at this opportune moment it would ere this have been driven into the heart of this man who has been no enemy of thine."

"Thy censure is worthy of you, Chief Rudolph, but this wretch pressed me into service."

"Nay, nay, Hidalgo. If I foresee rightly this man's caravan was quietly and peacefully traversing this 'Death Valley.'"

"I submit with alacrity, noble chief, to make my assurance good of not wantonly taking the life of any man, but believe me, my own apparatus was in immediate danger."

"I know, I know, Hidalgo, and I trusted you, for I believed that there was honor among our robber band, and I classed you, not with the supposed law-abiding municipal corporations that are often full of corruption, with no dignity of reputation, integrity or honorable intent."

"My worthy chief, I thank you, and I would lay my life at your feet rather than betray your credence. Your word has been my law since the day you rescued me from drowning in those black,

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turbulent waters, at the risk of your own life, where I had dashed to break the trail of my pursuers, who, had they have caught me, would have thrust me behind prison bars, where I would have lain languishing for months awaiting trial for ditching a train, for which I was not the guilty party, although I saw it done. The perpetrators making good their escape over the precipice, I had stopped a moment in case that I could render assistance, but an officer tapped me, saying:

"‘Ah! Here is the train smasher. We have him corraled now.’

"‘Not if I know it,’ said I, as my feet cast their echoing, shadowy footsteps behind me. Nor did I stop until I reached the stream and took the plunge, as business had been stagnant of late and money was tight for bail security. You remember it, don’t you?"

"Yes; very well, but Hidalgo, will you arise?"

"I am at your service, chief, and humble myself before you, although I am employed at this moment sitting on this man, ‘Shorty Porpoise,’ pinning him to this potash earth."

Shorty, making a vigorous effort to get up, shouted:

"Let me up, you black imp!"

"No, you don’t get up, Mr. Shorty Porpoise. No, sir. I’ve just squatavouised on you for a little recreation, but with no intention of steeling you with my knife, unless compelled."

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"When my deputies informed me that you were nearing Death Valley sands, I put my calculations in motion, to trot you off to our quiet retreat to be entertained—where my home has been since my chief pulled me back from going over the brink into eternity by fishing me out of the depths, where I had sunk, gurgling, gurgling, the second time from downright exhaustion—and hold you for a ransom, just as my chief tells me a body politic and the city demagogues unite in holding up the inhabitants for plunder—and high-flyingly call it graft, and the example has met with quite an universal following. So, so, my noble chief," he continued, as he gazed with an admiring look at his superior, "still they are not considered outlaws, therefore, no judgment can be secured."

"That may be, Hidalgo, but you have no apparent duty in shedding blood. Place your steel in its scabbard, that you might not in an unconscious passion prick the veins of—" The sentence was never finished, for there were two ringing reports from a pistol and the animal that the chief was riding sank groaning to the earth, and he exclaimed: "My God, my horse is shot."

Unconsciously, while conversing with Rudolph, Hidalgo had relaxed his iron grip on Shorty's wrists, and the quivering aim from the pistol, which he had managed to grasp, went astray from its mark and shot the horse.

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"Hi! Yi!" fiendishly yelled Hidalgo, the Greek, as he placed his hand on the hilt of his dagger. "Shoot, will you? Shoot your deliverer from death, inhuman barbarian, that you are," and like a maniac, again he raised his dagger, which Rudolph saw and said: "No, no, Hidalgo, there is blood enough flowing already. Down! I say, down! and shield that dagger, and hasten to my assistance; perhaps we can save this noble animal."

"Ey, ey! my master. This blood-thirsty savage is at your mercy, not mine." Saying which, he drew a sinew from his pocket and continued: "But I must bind this driveling, dragoon sort of a monster—Shorty Porpoise—with these deer thongs so tight I will venture my life that he cannot get another grab at that self-cocker, and to make sure his feet shall be sinewed, too."

"Here, Jeff Johnson. Look after this sea monster that would like to make rivers of blood flow in this desert land. See! It is coming in torrents from that wounded horse." And turning to Rudolph, who sat stroking the mane, said: "That bloodhound of a monster! Only for the love of you, my generous chieftain, I had it in my heart to run him through. Why you, too, are bleeding."

"That is nothing, my loyal Hidalgo, for I would sacrifice my very existence to save that of my horse. Oh, how he suffers! See his vital life-blood gushing from the injury. It is an ugly torn looking rent. Have I nothing with which to close it?

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"Ah! Here is the handkerchief that Miss Hope bound on my finger the day I cut it with my knife, and still retains the spots of blood which I will unite with that of yours, my faithful horse, in this, what might be the last throes of death.

"If your life, my beautiful steed, is severed—after having quenched that crimson flood with this little morsel of linen, kept in token of the preponderate love that imperceptibly entered my heart for that holy young lady—there will remain only that love an oasis in my memory learned at the knoll cottage.

"Wherein, too, I was taught that the purity of the all-absorbing love of a virgin should not be more than that of man, and the defilement of which was to sacrifice their lives to perpetual doom.

"Ah, my noble warrior, that little love token stanches the flow but does not stay your life, which is fast ebbing away.

"My warrior, my warrior, I would bear your pain, but am powerless to do more than give you my heartfelt caresses to soothe your agony"

"Chief, my honored chief," cried Hidalgo, "let me close your wound. Please listen to me, oh, chief! Chief! oh, chief, listen! Chief, for the love of that God—Miss Hope's God you called Him—whom you asked us to reverence above everything else and worship truthfully and sincerely, as did she with every throb of the heart. Listen, oh,

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listen! and take heed that Hidalgo is overwrought with grief and wants to dress your wound."

"I am attentive to you, my Hidalgo, and appreciative. But my wound is nothing to that of my noble animal, my warrior, my horse. Here, Hidalgo, lie his head upon my lap! Ah, that is better. Now, my suffering steed, whose dam was Princess Diana, one of Arabia's purest blood, and sired by Ormand, the god of America's ambitious heights, can you see Rudolph, your devoted master, who is talking to you and whose heart is rent in anguish as your kindly eyes seem to look into his pleadingly, with the assurance that he now can restore your waning faculties as he formerly relieved your wants."

Again Hidalgo, who could restrain his grief no longer, tried to arouse his chief.

"Chief, Chief Rudolph, you, too, are bleeding profusely and growing paler. Here is a sinew, let me bandage your arm to check the flow. My God, chief, it is broken!"

Raising a whistle to his lips he blew a shrill, startling note, which brought one of the trusties hastily to him.

"Jim, mount the swiftest horse belonging to the band and ride for your life to the nearest surgeon, no matter where, and bring him hither. Tell him the life of a human being depends on his rapidity and accelerating speed to relieve the profusion of blood and set the bones of a broken arm. And Jim,

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when you reach the forks blindfold and give him a few swift turns in a circle, and we will carry our fainting chief on a stretcher and meet you at the retreat."

Hidalgo, having dispatched the trusty, again resumed his seat at the side of the chief, who was still stroking his horse and uttering sorrowing words, as though the animal had the intellectual endowment to understand.

"My warrior, oh, my warrior. Look at me, your master, once more, to whom you were so devoted and by your superior strength and volition lent your utmost speed over plains, deserts, hills and mountains, often leaping precipices and other obstructions to prevent the degradation of his being arrested and arraigned as a robber chieftain. No practitioner of the law ever worked with more zeal for his client than you labored for me.

"Yes, my warrior, and I am lavishing my fondest endearments upon you, my best beloved excepting one—you know her, Hope, my angel—on earth. And I must tell you that your master, too, is dying and the tears he is raining upon you are but the dewdrops of death from his own brow, and together, my warrior, oh, my warrior, our spirits will take flight and our bodies will find their final rest in this remote region and sandy depths, where our good angel will seek and hover over us—not through fear, but with the hope of our spiritual welfare and salvation.

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"Ah, my trusty steed, how depressed is your breath. Truly the woe of death is upon you, which convinces me that my own waning vitality is near, but I cannot, oh, I cannot, repose quietly and watch you first to pass into eternity's door.

"Here, Hidalgo, give him a sip of water from your canteen, to revive and aid him in his efforts to prolong his diminishing breath. How lucky that we taught him to drink. And Hidalgo, I am growing weak. Promise that you will dig a grave, both wide and deep, that I may lie by my warrior's side in death."

"Here is my hand, chieftain, that your faithful horse shall be buried in the depths of this alkali dust so deep that birds of prey cannot feast on his flesh nor his bones lie bleaching in the sun." Addressing the remainder of the gang, which had drawn near, "Shall it not be so, my cronies?"

"Yi, yi," was mournfully sounded, and Rudolph, wearily looking at them, responded:

"Thank you, my comrades, for so heartily joining with my good Hidalgo here in this errand of mercy. My broken arm does not necessarily mean death, but this liberal flow of blood possibly comes from the tapping of an artery.

"My strength does not seem lasting, and ere it gives way I desire to express my gratitude for your indulgence with true fidelity of my every wish; also your trustworthy devotion, which I feel that I have won not through coercion but confidence and affec-

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tionate regard. And it is my sincere belief, although you are dubbed outlaws, that you have not more to repent than do those who secretly undermine the good name and character of their intimate, law-abiding and sincerely God-worshipping friends and unmercifully take advantage of destitute knowledge, docility and innocence to confidingly acquire their possessions, then absorb with abandonment all to their own interest.

"I have proven you to be merciful, tender and humane, for which I say 'Bravo, my comrades,' which is the approving counsel of your chief, who also admonishes you to bend you knee and bow your head in honest supplication and unfeigned reverence to God—the same God which Miss Hope worshiped. Then you will ever abhor the appropriating of others' belongings and the steel which spills the blood, even in self-defense or of one of your kind.

"And proudly does your chieftain with almost his last breath again thank you for the magnanimity of your promise to bury this noble animal, who could not talk but had the instinct of soulful man. His spirit has departed and my soul is going with him and I bid you all——"

"Here, you —— vagabond pirate! Come here, quick, before your chieftain dies, while you are blubbering around as useless as a snail," hoarsely yelled Shorty. "I have strained my throat to its utmost and inhaled enough of this infernal deadly

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atmospheric gas to inflate a balloon, that I might emit sound enough to reach those dumbfounded and blasted black ears of yours."

Still Hidalgo heeded not, so wrapped was he in trying to restore his master by giving him water from the canteen.

Again roared Shorty, "If you do not want your chieftain to die, hasten here. He must not die! He shall not die! That lead was not meant for him or his horse, but for you, son of a gun and contemptuous vagrant of vagabondary."

The draught of water somewhat restored the chief's waning strength, and Hidalgo, after again tightening the sinew above the bleeding vein, turned his attention to Shorty.

"What now? Out with it mighty swift, Porpoise, and stop that screeching rumpus or my chief will imagine he is entering Hades."

"Imp of those regions, had it not been for your chieftain you would have sent me to the crossing of the Phleg-e-thon river, which they say leads into the burning pit of Hades and runs fire instead of water, where I would send you in a jiffy if my hands were not pinioned, but by the eternal jiminies I do not want him to tackle it. Unbind my hands!"

"Not yet, porpoise Shorty. It is time that you had learned who is who. My chieftain's last moments shall not be disturbed by such heathenish calliope clamor, if I have to stuff your guzzle with

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this valley siftings of Death," raged Hidalgo, as he turned to go.

"Stop, imp of Satan. Your chief must not die. I heard your order for a surgeon. You knew that he could not arrive in time to prevent your chief from entering your own infernal regions. Has your jockey gone?"

"No, he is mounting. The horses were tethered far distant, that they might not discover us to your caravan by their neighing."

"Deuce to your twaddle," interrupted Shorty. "There is no time to lose. Countermand your order, you brute, and I will order my doctor immediately. I crossed these diabolical regions once without one, and my lucky star was in the ascendant or my check would have been issued free gratis down the Phleggethon without my consent, passing on to the infernal regions, which must be in close proximity to this diabolical, scorching Death Valley. Twice the mercy of your chief has saved my life at the moment you would have robbed me of it, and I swear the earth shall be made to whizz on its axis a thousand deals faster than it does now to keep life in his body to dutifully maintain his heart beatings, and the sooner you expedite matters the better."

"Well, here I am, Shorty Porpoise. There might be some good in you after all, although you look fishy and might yet prove to be a scaly traitor, in which case I warn you that you would land in that scalding river with a mighty sharp and speedy turn,

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without even waiting to find the regular crossing. But where is the doctor, that I may hasten his presence here?"

"Unmistakably you are an imp of the utter darkness. Unloosen my hands, that I can use my cipher to bring him here."

"Not by the eternal vengeance will I let you practice that fraud, Shorty Porpoise."

"Then, imp, take that red book from my pocket, or rather I will dictate while you write, or can you write?"

"Yes, old Porpoise. My father sent me to school when he first landed in America and kept me there."

"Pity he had not sent you back to your black infernal regions and kept you there, imp of Hades."

"Halt your palaver, Mr. Shorty Porpoise, or my blessed chief will be fainting again," argued Hidalgo.

"Well, then, imp, write the words I give from memory. George, James, Tom, Jack, Ben——"

Hidalgo wrote no more, but raged. "By the Jerico-whill-i-mi-cuss, do you know who is who and what is what, Mr. Shorty Porpoise? You forget, or did you know that I am Hidalgo, the lawless terror of terrors, and not a baboon? That cipher might call all your vagabond men here to cut our throats.

"Only for my dying chieftain there I would try the edges of my dagger on you this very minute and spoil your puffy figure. Come, sir; Mr. Porpoise,

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out with your order in plain American English, or there will be other bones to repair besides my master's."

"Well, imp of Hades, write then:

"Grimes, accompany Doc. and follow bearer of this note in haste to set the bones of a broken arm of the preserver of my life and stanch the great flow of blood. Sylvester Arnold. Oro."

"Mr. Porpoise, why do you place Oro after your name? I want none of your sly tricks."

"Only cowards are tricky," retorted Shorty, "the nature of whichimps ought to be posted. To guard against them I attach 'Oro'—meaning gold and our password—otherwise my men would believe it a counterfeit or a decoy for their carcasses."

CHAPTER XIX.

After their attack by the highwaymen the caravan moved forward a couple of miles, and as their captain—Sylvester Arnold—still remained behind, halted to await his coming.

"Doc.," said Grimes, as he stroked his bay mare Bessie before putting on the saddle, "I think it high time for Cap. to heave in sight. It is a chance if he has not been waylaid by some of those buzzy bee looters that swarm in this Death Valley as a resort from the mounted police. What do you say? I'll bet my old bay Bessie on it."

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"You can keep your courting, Bessie Grimes. Certainly there is something wrong."

"Jinks Jo! you bet I'll keep her, and she knows when I comb her mane, brush out the dandruff and polish her down that I want to put her at her best. When I went to see Rosa Bell I always took her, because she could take an onward move far ahead of the other chaps. But a city chap appeared with his automobile and took Rosa Bell in, and gayly passed me like a streak of greased lightning on their way to the church to get spliced. Doc., by hooky, some one is coming this way, riding like the wind, which old Bessie is champing to do, for she knows when a storm is brewing. Our captain must be in some born-busted tangle. What, a message from captain?" said Grimes, and read the note the trusty gave him, then handed it, saying:

"Here, Doc., scan it over while I saddle the mule. Then you vault courting Bessie and give her full rein, then I will keep Sambo in her tracks." And together with the messenger they rode swiftly to the scene of the late skirmish, where the captain, still bound, anxiously awaited their appearance.

Doc. leaped from the saddle and drew his knife to sever the cords, saying:

"Why, Captain Arnold, how came you here?"

"I can't tell you now, Doc. No, no, let the cords alone. Do you see that man lying besides his dead horse?"

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"Yes, yes, but captain, are you hurt? Let me cut those bandages, which are cutting into your flesh."

"By the eternal jiminies, no. There is no time to lose. Unearth all the medical knowledge you ever knew and save—or rather put life into—that man. Only for his timely aid my own soul would now be wrestling with the damned. And all the vast quantities of gold in our mysterious mine could not give tranquility to my mind if that rare yeoman should succumb from my missent bullet and find his sepulchre in this God-forsaken Death Valley. Doc., use your best skill, preserve his life, which is almost extinct, even though he be a bandit chieftain, and your fortune is made. Rush, Doc., rush to him!"

Doc. found Hidalgo kneeling beside the chieftain, bathing his brow and dropping water between the pallid lips, murmuring: "My chief, my chief, oh, my chief, wake up. You must have fallen asleep from weakness. Surely you are not dead. Hidalgo wants to confess that he is to blame. Had he have hearkened to you those death-dealing missles would not have let out this life-blood, which is the circulating fluid that keeps your heart in motion. I wonder if it is beating? You look as inanimate as does your lifeless horse.

"Ah, there is a faint throbbing, but unless Shorty Porpoise's doctor comes very soon it will have ceased entirely."

"Here I am, sir, at your service."

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"I am grateful, doctor. My chief is in your hands," graciously said Hidalgo.

Doc. proceeded to administer restoratives to produce animation and placed the broken limb in a plaster cast, where he bound it firmly to a strong support.

Faithfully and without flagging he worked with the unconscious man, and his efficiency soon was rewarded by feeble signs of returning vitality. Then, turning to Hidalgo, said:

"It would be well to improvise a stretcher, for it is my judgment that your chieftain should be removed to permanent quarters with all possible haste."

"Well, doctor," said Hidalgo, "I foresaw the necessity of your order, therefore with the assistance of our band have rudely constructed a frame of two long, strong pole handles that have sharp, hooked knives at the end that we use to pluck the prickly pear fruit from the top of the immense cacti which grows and abounds spontaneously, then, too, in case of extreme thirst to sever or slit the trunks to obtain water, and fastened to them a blanket, using deer sinews for thread."

When Hidalgo saw his beloved chieftain quietly and comfortably resting on the stretcher, he felt an exultant joy and assumed his customary bullying disposition.

"Well, Shorty Porpoise, my chief is calmly reposing, and I presume to assume your importance

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in the affair, thus proving your life valueless, you want your thongs cut, but I can see by the gleam of your eyes that you would like to make my heels fly from under me at the click of that little popgun of yours, so I can't unwind your hands for a while nor let your doctor depart until all danger for my chief is past. Therefore, you can at once order your caravan and equipments and accompany us to our retreat. I will not exact a red cent or a glittering dollar which I had expected to have added to our exchequer—plucked from the dividends of those marvelously rich gold mines of yours—as an equivalent for your carcass while yet propelled by the power of breath.”

Hidalgo, not being able to restrain his vengeful feelings at the loss of the ransom for which he had been planning for months, vindictively called: “Here, boys, boost him over; boost him over, over again. Give Shorty Porpoise a few turns, so that he will the more fully understand the methods of this Valley of Death.”

Shorty Porpoise—as Hidalgo had dubbed him on account of his short and thick dimensions, and the band declaring it not a misnomer—had suddenly sprung into notoriety from ocean to ocean by his extravagant disbursement of money.

United to high living, flashy dressing and expensive turnouts, he had chartered a train to cross the continent on lightning speed record.

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And when he had drawn his checks to a limit by his prodigality, he chose a picked company and repaired to the Death Valley vicinity, where the public was given to understand he owned fabulously rich mines of gold with which to replenish his safes.

Reading the publication of these profuse boasts fired the brain of Hidalgo, consequently, unknown to his chieftain, had for months put his emissaries on the outlook to report the vain Cræsus' entrance into Death Valley.

No one knew better than Sylvester Arnold (or Shorty Porpoise) the dangers attending this trip, which he really took as a subterfuge. He knew the windings in and out without having to penetrate the interior. Very few persons make the attempt, for there is no exhilarating atmosphere and no living thing can exist except reptiles like the horned toad and deadly rattlesnake. Nevertheless, his equipments were made as though for a through passage of that Valley of Death, which is far below the level of the sea, with no vegetation excepting the cacti, and that only on the outskirts, as though protecting man and beasts from entering the deadly precincts of the interior, which is void of all growth.

Much of the cacti contains water which, like the maple, requires niches cut to drain it, but the handling of the cacti is very difficult, as there are thousands of long, needle-like stickers that jab the hands and millions of tiny pricklers every quarter inch of the shrub, which at the slightest touch pierce

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the flesh and, being almost imperceptible to the eye, there is no limit to judge the extreme anguish felt.

Unfortunately many travelers, not knowing of the edible fruit and of the thirst-quenching fluid, often traverse weary miles until, worn from fatigue and famished, succumb at last to the inevitable while yet in the prime of life, and whose ambition had decoyed them there in the researches of science or mineral wealth, and their bones remain in a state of non-decay for years on the alkali sands.

In order to vouchsafe his craftiness and give credulity to his asserted gold deposit, it was necessary to cross a certain portion of this hazardous valley route. Therefore, they were just entering the borders when the caravan was intercepted by the brigands which had been ambushed, who, having used their cacti sabers to clear a passage, duly surprised them.

Naturally the small party with mining intent, concluding that these desert rovers and freebooters meant plunder, with no objection to commit murder, summoned all their resistance at command, which consisted more in the abundance of up-to-date weapons and ammunition than in numbers to use them.

Shorty, not caring to divulge the mystery of his replenishments, chose only a trusted few to accompany him. Grimes, unsophisticated and unsuspecting, therefore a true and easy tool; Doc., the surgeon, and Jo, cook and roustabout, completed the

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number, and their appearance was as questionable as was the whereabouts they procured their vast amount of gold.

With determined efforts they rushed pell-mell into the melee without thought or restraint. And Shorty assailed the tall, muscular Greek, Hidalgo, with the same audacious courage and unhesitating consequences that had always marked his career. And Hidalgo, quick as a cat makes a victim of a mouse, caught the hand which held the revolver that was to send a bullet to follow the aim of the eye which rested without variance in the center of his own, and like a flash encircled him with a bear-like hug and bore him to the earth.

Then he drew from the scabbard his stiletto, and as he raised it aloft gave the bonanza king his new cognomen :

"Ah, ha ! Mr. Shorty Porpoise, your block popper missed its mark for once, but this blade is a surer warning, so if you ever learned any prayers dig into them right now, for you have no moments to lose," and with tigerish venom he whirled the instrument tauntingly in the air, and had not his chieftain arrived at this opportune occasion and commandingly calling his demand, "Unhand thy victim, Hidalgo !" the loss of another soul would have been recorded on his already overburdened conscience.

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CHAPTER XX.

"Good morning, darling aunt. Did you rest well last night?"

"Not quite as usual, Jeallo, as I did not have my accustomed outing yesterday. My cough being convulsive and the weather unfavorable, the doctor recommended my remaining indoors. As a consequence, sleep with its restful presence did not visit my sanctuary until a very late hour and then in fitful moods."

"Don't you think it was vile of the doctor? No one can sleep without having had plenty of fresh air. Where was your maid, Truth, that she did not take you any how? But there! how could we expect it, when she is only too anxious for you to die? Why, it is very plain that she is angling to get your money. She never leaves your side a moment when I am around, as though you would give it to me. But where is she now? Unless I am here she neglects you, and I am really out of patience," snarled Jeallo.

"Truth is taking her breakfast, Jeallo. She did not seek her couch last night, but kept vigil by me. I insisted that she take a light repast before retiring for her much-needed rest. Are you not up unusually early this morning, Jeallo?"

"Yes, aunt, I am going motoring with Mr. Peabody. I should collapse if I did not take the refreshing morning air. And that hateful Truth

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ought to take you out, too, but she is figuring on motoring you to the graveyard, the mean thing."

Not noticing the ill-tempered remark, her aunt asked: "Have you known Mr. Peabody long, Jeallo?" Then an attack of convulsive coughing seized her, but Jeallo, not waiting its cessation, hastened to answer:

"Why, yes, aunt. Just after I came here a friend introduced us on the street, and he is perfectly splendid. Why, aunt, Mr. Peabody is a-w-f-u-l rich, having recently arrived from Alaska, where he has a-w-f-u-l rich gold mines. And, aunt, he says that every particle of gold taken from his mines is perfectly pure. Just think of it, aunt, as being pure and unadulterated, and he is daily expecting his ship to arrive loaded with it. Aunt, I will confide to you a little secret. He is dead in love with me."

The old lady, quite exhausted, feebly said: "I dare say he is, Jeallo."

"Why, yes, aunt, he says he can't help it, because I am so sweet. And oh, I must tell you that he has such great big diamonds, too," rattled on Jeallo, "and when we return from our auto trip I am to have a big glittering one on my engagement finger."

"Are you going far?" ventured the old lady, thinking it necessary to say something.

"Only to the races, aunt, then take a short turn to see if we can sight his ship coming in. You must not worry, aunt. I will tell Truth to look well after your comforts while I am gone. Mr. Pea-

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body promised not to keep me away too long, as I told him that I was your sole relative and protector since your severe illness now that your children could not be with you. So you may be sure we will be back by 6 P. M. dinner, which he will enjoy so much, especially if he and I can have it tete-a-tete.

"I know, aunt, you would not want to have one of your disgusting coughing spells before him, even though you were able to sit at the table, and I should think that Truth, being a servant here, ought to know that her presence would be an intrusion and detrop.

"Why, aunt, she ought to be ashamed to come, since she is mixed up in that disgraceful killing affair and her sister in jail waiting to be tried for murdering that nice Bishop. It is perfectly ignominious, and Truth does not appear one bit abashed. Dear me, I should not be able to hold up my head, let alone looking any one straight in the eyes as she does.

"That good Bishop was too lovely for anything. Why, aunt, he asked me to refrain from sinful pleasures, to obey God by keeping His holy commandments, and join the next confirmation class that I might receive religious instructions and unite with the church.

"I thought that would be grand, so I went that very day to select a confirmation gown, for I would want the handsomest in the class. I found one, a beautiful creation that could not have suited me

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better. The French model lady said if the fit was not perfect she could have it changed to my liking; and I told her that we would arrange the matter later on.

"My! I wish you could have seen it, aunt. Being of the daintiest white silk veil and all fluffy with trimmings of beautiful lace, it was most exquisite. I met the Bishop on the street and told him that I would be at the class room at their next meeting.

"I was afraid another purchaser might be ahead of me, so I hurried home, not even stopping to look at the new-shaped hats just from Paris displayed in the shop windows. I wanted to get that two hundred dollars which I saw Truth put away in the china closet. I knew that you would say, 'Yes, Jeallo, certainly you can have it.' Therefore, Miss Truth had no say in the affair, for it was not hers. I determined that I would not disturb you, as I had peeped in your bedroom and saw you sleeping so sweetly.

"But, aunt, I found Truth in the dining-room—the vixen, she is always where she is not wanted—and I made bold to ask her for it, as it was near time for closing the store. I took great pains to piously tell her that I was going to join the Bishop's church and desired the money to purchase a confirmation gown.

"The termagant! What do you believe, aunt, she answered? Well, I will tell you.

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“‘Indeed, Jeallo, you *cannot* have that two hundred dollars. Being uncle’s sacred coin, it must be used especially for my dear old lady’s needs.’ ‘D-e-a-r old lady.’ She did not mean it. It looks as though you were very d-e-a-r and she much in love with you when she goes off to bed leaving you here alone, when you might be seized with that terrible coughing as you had just now and result in your death. Was it not lucky I came in when I did?

“As I was saying, I would not be confirmed without that dress and could not get it without the money. I knew it was mine by right, don’t you see, aunt, as I am to be heiress to a goodly share of your fortune some day anyhow?

“And that stingy old maid Truth need not have been so discourteous, for it was none of her affairs and I was determined that she should not interfere with my being confirmed, so I watched my opportunity and procured the ten twenties and rapidly made my way to the store. But I arrived a moment too late, for the clerk had just closed for the night. And aunt, was it not a shame? No amount of persuasion of mine could induce him to open it, but told me to be on hand early the next morning.

“Then, aunt, was it not too bad? That nice old Bishop was murdered the very same night.

‘If you will take my advice, aunt, it would be well to keep an eye on Truth, too. She is very sly and no more to be depended on than was her sister

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Hope, who killed the nice old Bishop that so graciously asked me to be confirmed. It made me really ill when the next morning Mr. Peabody phoned the news. The first thought that struck me was 'I cannot buy that handsome gown now, as there will be no confirmation.' Then it occurred that I ought to return the money so as to save the occasion of Truth being clamorous. But in this state of perplexity Mr. Peabody again called me to the phone and appeared to be much excited and said the city as a whole was in a violent rage against Miss Hope and that it would be a miracle should they find her if she was not lynched."

"Surely, Jeallo, their conscience could not have let them commit such a terrible act. But you did right in putting the money back in the china closet," said the old lady, striving to control her exhausting cough.

"And he urged me to go motoring to subdue my disappointment about the dress. And, aunt, his commiseration was so great that he took me to every conceivable resort that could be deemed a refuge or hiding place for the girl who murdered the nice old Bishop that was going to confirm me in his church. And now, aunt, don't get nervous when I tell you that some of the places were the most vile, outlandish and barbarous looking haunts and would strike terror to the strongest of nerves, no matter how robust the individual.

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"Mr. Peabody, noticing my pallor, asked, 'Are you sick?' Shivering from fright I answered, 'No, but cold,' and thought we had better return.

"He did not dream that my chill originated from the fear of footpads, for I had those twenties concealed about my person. I had thought to display them to Mr. Peabody, who being short of funds until his ship should have arrived might want to borrow them. Then, too, that dress was still in my mind, for there were other churches besides the Bishop's.

"My, but Mr. Peabody brought me home at a scorching rate, which unstrung my nerves still more. I remonstrated, but he said: 'Why, dearie, it will be all right if we are arrested for speeding, as those diamonds will foot up for a good round sum.' Entering the house, I put my arms around Truth's neck and explained how sorry I was that the Bishop had been murdered, but she made no answer, not even showing a sign of grief, and stood quiet and heartless as though she were a statue. She knows, of course, that her sister Hope is guilty, and was afraid that we would find her.

"You must have thought strange that I did not come in to see you, aunt, but Mr. Peabody took me day after day racing here, there and everywhere to obtain clue of that girl murderess; therefore I slipped quietly out that you might not be disturbed.

"It was really kind of Mr. Peabody to take so much interest in the affair. He said 'I would have

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looked most charming in that lovely dress,' and Miss Hope should be made to endure the extreme penalty of the law as a consequence for his disappointment in not seeing me robed in that confirmation attire so suited to my maidenly reserve and simplicity. Was it not sweet of him?

"And now, aunt, is it not outrageous? Truth's sister Hope has returned scandalously and brazenly by herself. Why, she was as gleeful as though coming from an unusually attractive matinee comedy, in the meantime ostentatiously exhibiting the money which belonged to the murdered Bishop—calling it 'uncle's sacred money' to make people believe her crazy."

"Uncle's sacred money, Jeallo? Uncle's sacred money, did you say, Jeallo?" asked the old lady in a faint, agitated voice.

"Yes, aunt, and the papers are all teeming with the news. I knew that you were too ill to read the account and that Truth would not fully explain the facts, being so closely allied, therefore I thought I would run in just a moment and give you the whole particulars.

"I knew that you would sympathize with me for having been so basely treated about that money when I wanted it for such a holy cause, of buying my confirmation dress.

"Truth did not miss it, though, for I put it back in the china closet, thinking she might plan a rupture

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between Mr. Peabody and me, but he adores and keeps me constantly to himself.

"He says the people are anxious for the trial of Hope and is sure of a conviction, therefore I thought best that you should understand what kind of a maid you are harboring. I do hope they will hang her sister Hope who murdered the nice Bishop, and I keep repeating it over and over, thinking it might have some judicial effect.

"I ought to be going, aunt, for Mr. Peabody invited me to motor with him to sight the ships, which surely would enter the harbor this afternoon.

"You must take good care of yourself. I knew it would do you a world of good to see me and I am glad I came and would stay longer but Mr. Peabody is so exacting. I wonder why that lofty-minded Truth don't come? Her satisfactory estimation of herself is so abundant that she believes you can make as good progress to health while she is indulging in the luxury of slumber as when she—your maid—is by your side. And it is very likely the truth, for certainly you are much weaker than I ever saw you before. I must impress upon her the necessity of being more vigilant, also more faithful in administering your cough elixir, for Mr. Peabody is very anxious to see you, as he is aware how much I adore you. By-bye, aunt."

Going into the hall instead of proceeding to the main stairway, she made a sharp turn through a door opening into a long balcony at the end of which

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were a flight of stairs that descended into the street. About midway of the balcony she met one of the maids.

"Juliette," said Jeallo, "where is Truth? Is she sleeping still?"

"Yes, Miss Jeallo. She lingered over her coffee quite a length of time, as she was very weary."

"Gee! when she is so negligent she cannot expect to be a beneficiary to aunt's money after she dies. I say, Juliette, did the doctor tell Truth yesterday that aunt had the consumption?"

"Not exactly, Miss Jeallo."

"Well, what did he say, Juliette?"

"He said that unless the cough be restricted he could not vouch that consumption would not be a result, Miss Jeallo," sorrowfully said Juliette, for she was much attached to her mistress.

"Oh, dear, oh, dear, and consumptive patients sometimes last for years, and I am dying to get away. Only for Mr. Peabody I am sure I could not stand it. Why, Juliette, the length of time I have been here seems incredibly long, and when I first saw aunt, so frail and delicate, I was certain she was near the end. But now I suppose she will have the consumption, and if that odious old maid Truth was not so habitually attentive that cough would have ceased long ago, which now as a fact will keep aunt lingering until doomsday.

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"Juliette, I do hope Mr. Peabody will put the diamond engagement ring on my finger to-day. He is a-w-f-u-l rich. Then I can just snap my fingers and not wait for aunt's money."

"Certainly not, Miss Jeallo."

"My, wouldn't I be happy then? Really, Juliette, he is a-w-f-u-l proud that I am so very devoted to aunt, and believes she will leave me a great share of her large fortune."

"Is that so, Miss Jeallo?"

"Yes, and, Juliette, while taking the measure of my finger he mentioned that it would not be best to marry without the knowledge of my aunt—which I had proposed as jolly fun—as being inconsiderate of her feelings, consequently leave me out of her will."

"'Assuredly,' I said, 'Mr. Peabody, she could not! Why, I am her niece who has been so very kind to her.' And, Juliette, she would not dare to, for I have taken great pains to impress her that I am to be one of the co-heirs with her children. And as for Truth, the Jade, my determination is that not a cent outside of a servant's salary shall she receive."

"O, Miss Jeallo!"

"Why, of course, Juliette, by rights it is mine, and have endeavored to prove it to Mr. Peabody. But he continually urges and insists that aunt should personally, in writing, arrange a marriage dot, before the ceremony is performed"—adding mischievously, with twinkling eyes—"no matter whom you marry, which he need not have indicated as being

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a joke, for his love for me is very potent, and would be a strenuous risk for another to claim it."

"Surely, Miss Jeallo?"

"Certainly, Juliette. And he convinced me that it would be the proper thing, don't you see, to have a dot settled on me, then I could be independent. That is why I came in to see aunt so early this morning, and was happy to find that Truth was not with her."

"But after all, we did not have the matter fixed, as I was so enthusiastic in illustrating the exquisitely beautiful gown for my confirmation, which that girl Hope was mean enough to upset by murdering that nice Bishop, that I did not mention my errand. And being nearly noon I was afraid Truth—who is my abhorrence—would pop in before the settlement could be adjusted satisfactorily."

"Then you are going to marry Mr. Peabody, Miss Jeallo?"

"You ask that question, Juliette? Why, he would die of grief if I was to refuse him so there is no other way out of it. I will tell him that I had a long interview and confidential conversation with aunt and he will take it for granted that I am well provided for. Here comes Mr. Peabody in the auto: Good-bye, Juliette."

Had not Jeallo been so intent with her own selfish and deceitful aims she would have discovered that they were conversing by a large window which opened onto the balcony from the bedroom at the

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head of the old lady's sleeping couch, that Truth had raised to its utmost capacity to let the fresh air circulate freely through the room, as the high and wide old-fashioned head-board protected her patient from the direct draught.

And that dear old lady whose years numbered three score and ten, and always had affiliated with only the strictly honest and pure in heart, as she lay there in her helplessness could not escape hearing all those tortuous words.

Each one was a revelation, which penetrated her brain and quickened the pulsations of her heart until she felt it was bursting with pain.

Never had she entertained the remotest thought that Jeallo could be so wicked.

She had believed her giddy and thoughtless, but attributed it to her youth, which in more mature years would pass away.

When the conversation had ceased, she murmured, "Jeallo, Jeallo, how can you seemingly be so kind and loving, while yet in your heart, soul, and brain, you are entertaining meditations and directing your mind, to the working to me an injury and desiring my death?"

In grief, the tears that had formed gushed from her eyes, and in trickling streams rolled down the deep furrows of her aged cheeks, where she absorbed them with the cob-web of a handkerchief, which she had specially requested Truth to hand her on that morning—being the anniversary of her

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own plighted love. The lover had said, "Take this little kerchief as a souvenir of our betrothal kiss, to bind our hearts until I can place on your finger the jeweled circlet—meaning that our love will be without end."

Faintly between her sobs she lisped, "Lover of my youth, and husband of my maturity, little did we dream in our most fanciful imaginings that this little token of remembrance of our lifetime vow, would be drenched with the scalding and bitter tears which flow from the fountain of my crushed spirit!"

"Now that you are no more in this life, my old age yearns for true fidelity and trustful sympathy." Her strength almost failed, yet with more stress she exclaimed in anguish:

"O jealousy, with all thy rancorous sting,
Thou canst with honor victory bring!"

CHAPTER XXI.

Truth, after having breakfasted, repaired to her own apartment for a thorough rest, knowing her services required her to be on hand in the dead of the night, when the strenuous efforts of throwing off the irritating matter from the lungs was at its highest degree, also the doctor had cautioned her to be on the alert to administer antidotes.

For some unaccountable reason, though, she could not obtain the repose she sought. Her mind would not desist from the freedom of disturbing

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thoughts. There was a continuous reluctance to sink into quietude, for the racking cough seemed to echo in her ears, and her eyelids refused to close from sight the helpless, gray-haired old lady.

Arising, she closed the blinds, drew the curtains and arranged the drapery that midnight darkness might prevail—thus inducing Morpheus to appear—but he shunned her very presence, but not without invading her mind with the vainest imaginings why he loitered. Her patience forsook her and she abandoned the enticing hope of summoning him.

Dressing, she entered the sick room, and was not surprised to find the old lady in a very languid condition. "Ah," she thought, "mental telegraphy restrained Morpheus from being manifest. But why that care-worn, weary look and reddened eyes, as though inflamed by weeping? Evidently something unfortunate had occurred to produce so sudden and unfavorable a change."

Immediately Truth endeavored to relieve the old lady's failing strength by massage treatment and kind words, then softly hummed a lullaby, and felt compensated when she saw her charge lying quietly, as though in peaceful slumber.

Judge of her consternation when, a moment later, the old lady, with unclosed eyes, addressed her: "Truth, I desire you to go and telegraph to my son and daughter that I am rapidly failing in health, of which heretofore I deemed it best not to inform them; but I long to see them before I die."

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"Before returning, Truth, go to the office of Attorney Goodman and say that, if at leisure, I request him to come to see me on important business.

"Afterwards, you must really go to visit your sister Hope, who is in such dire distress, where your sacred duty calls you, which, forsooth, in your devotional and genuine forbearance you have granted to me. While it is gratifying, I feel that I have accrued a debt that cannot be cancelled."

Kneeling, Truth said: "No, no, dearest one; it is I who am your debtor, for bestowing on me your filial affection, for which I have hungered since the death of my own dear mother in my early youth, and craved to fulfill the part of a dutiful daughter in your last years of longevity."

"But I should not consider myself so if I left you alone in your present weakened condition." And she placed a kiss of affection on the brow which she had been soothing with the palm of her hand.

A loving smile flitted over the face of the invalid as she softly answered:

"Truly, you have been a blessing to me. Even your name—Truth—indicates your worth and reliance, and I assure you that your deep affection is reciprocated, but, dear Truth, something urges me that it is best to attend to my business affairs, so I insist that you go."

Silently, and with eyes clouded by tears, Truth poured a teaspoonful of nerve tonic in a small glass of water, raised the old lady, and affectionately

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placing one arm around her, impressed another kiss on her cheek as she drained the last drop, then, with the old lady's assent for the maids to keep vigil with her, she withdrew.

Truth had not derived the least intuitive knowledge of the part Jeallo's scope of action had played to make such a rapid change in the vitality of the venerable lady, consequently thought Juliette's answer rather singular when she asked:

"Will you, Juliette, carefully take charge of the sick room while I am away?"

"Yes, Miss Truth; but I hope Miss Jeallo will not come in," said Juliette. "In fact, I wish she would go away altogether." She spoke with such asperity that Truth questioningly asked:

"Why so, Juliette?"

"Because, Miss Truth, Miss Jeallo frequently visits my lady's room the hour of her reposing, noting the time, too, that you have retired for rest or are absent. Cautiously she enters, as though she would not disturb her aunt's slumbering, and on tiptoe wanders around, slyly peeping into everything—even the dressing-case drawers, removing them and carefully scrutinizing every detail of architecture as though hunting for a secret spring, receptacle, or false panel, also the escritoire, and the little black trunk by my lady's bedside has not escaped her.

"Sometimes, Miss Truth, Miss Jeallo goes out before my lady awakens, carelessly remarking,

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'Aunt being very systematic, I was looking for something to tidy.' But if she does arouse or awakes Miss Jeallo glides to her side and salutes her: 'Good morning, dear aunt,' adjusts the covering, smooths the pillow, saying, 'I am very glad to find you so well. I came in for a little chat, for I know you must be lonely.' And, Miss Truth, it always ends in an agitating, nerve-racking, mischief-making conversation which has been a source of great wonderment to you when again you approached her bedside."

"Juliette, I am sorry that I had not known of this before."

"Really, Miss Truth, I believed it would have disturbed your already overtaxed mind; and she being a relative of my lady you would have hesitated to interfere."

"Only a relative through marriage, Juliette. No kindred blood circulates in their veins."

"At any rate, Miss Truth, whatever her motive she would have persisted in accomplishing it at any cost. What possible good does she expect to gain by her observations and why does she persist in these annoying ways?"

"That is a mystery to me, too, Juliette. The Great Creative One has produced many noxious and seriously troublesome pests with an object, possibly of trying our forbearance."

"Jeallo's temerity is incomprehensible and surely not compatible to harmony. Her misconstruction,

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of the upright actions of others to suit the fabrications of her own fallacies, with such consummate skill is in gross defiance to the universal edict of "Love thy neighbor as thyself."

"Credulous persons cannot conceive the enormity of such conduct, therefore, are often duped by the duplicity and protestations of affection, as that which Jeallo expresses to her aunt."

"But eventually the guile will be detected by some unforeseen event, which will ever dispel a trust in the truthfulness of the pretended warm-hearted declarations—there, Juliette, 'The mouth of the foolish causes destruction as well as being near it.'"

"I am much exercised as to the effect Jeallo's peculiarities will render to the health of our aged lady. Lock the door, Juliette, that she may not visit the sick room today, as I could not vouch for the result."

"It is safe from intrusion today, as Miss Jeallo has gone motoring with Mr. Peabody, Miss Truth."

CHAPTER XXII.

After Truth had gone Juliette, accompanied by Nanette, repaired to the old lady's room, where they found her in tranquil sleep. With thoughtful quietude they nimbly withdrew to the recess, which was a sort of sanctuary wherein the old lady had spent many happy moments in self communings, and fitted also with many collections of art, relics,

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souvenirs and choice antiquities, which she had gathered since early childhood in her travels.

Quite an hour had elapsed when the doorbell rang. Juliette, peering through the mazy meshes of transparent drapery, saw that her mistress was awake, and said to Nanette: "You remain here and I will go to her."

And she asked: "My lady, did the sudden ringing arouse you?"

"No, Juliette. Please send Nanette and if it is Attorney Goodman she can usher him to my room. Then you retire to a convenient distance of my bell, as I may require the presence of each."

But a few moments elapsed ere Attorney Goodman entered the room, and the old lady beckoned him to be seated while she said: "I am glad you were not particularly engaged in special business as I felt a necessity to confer with you as to my property settlements, which my age and state of health makes known to me should not be deferred."

Still holding her hand, which he had taken, he said: "Madam, I am sorry to find you not improved in health. However, it is a wise person who provides in season for the inevitable while yet the mental faculties are unclouded, that they may deal in an intellectual and honest manner, not only in the sight of man, but also in the Lord, and oftentimes it saves disadvantageous issues."

"Thank you," softly she murmured. "Please be seated."

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"Attorney Goodman, I thought proper to make my will while I am strong enough to dictate concisely. The requisitions are in that escritoire and I am in sound mind and devoid of undue influence when I express that you make my son, daughter, and Miss Truth Fairchild equally co-heirs to all my property and possessions with no other legatees or bequests.

"Miss Truth has been a faithful and devoted attendant, even to the detriment of her strong constitution. At present her sister Hope, who Truth assures me, is perfectly innocent of the terrible crime ascribed to her, requires financial aid as well as sympathizing, therefore, I place a required amount on deposit which will eventually be taken from Truth's inheritance."

"Madam, I am chief counsellor for Miss Hope Fairchild, and as the evidence now stands I am fearful that it is overwhelmingly against her, although in my own mind I believe her guiltless. How else could I, when I look into those innocent and soulful eyes? Why, I could as easily pronounce the 'Madonna' a criminal as Miss Hope Fairchild. But that would have no weight with the jury, therefore, I must prove her to be insane, which surely is the case."

"Oh, Attorney Goodman, and that would be to consign her to a living death. What probable evidence is there that she could be so judged?"

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"Why, by her odd behavior. She speaks of the robber chieftain, but when questioned will give no definite or comprehensive explanation, and the detailed directions that she gave were very non-committal and vague, as though trying to shield some one. Had not the detective been wary he never would have found the house in which she was restrained, and from which she returned gaily, holding the stolen coin in her hand. And when arrested exhibited it, saying, "See! I saved it! Here it is, 'Uncle's Sacred Money.'"

As he made the last assertion at the conclusion of his narrative the old lady quickly arose to a sitting posture, as though shocked by electricity, which was really the emotional capacity of the soul rather than strength, and firmly said:

"Oh, no sir; not insane. She speaks the truth, for I, too, had one thousand dollars of 'Uncle's Sacred Money,' and Miss Faith Fairchild asked as a favor that it be invested in deserving channels. That is why Truth is with me as my companion—to look after it with no increasing care to me."

It was now Attorney Goodman's turn to be quite dumb with surprise, but managed to articulate:

"What a curious compact, and is certainly a blow to my plea." As though at the end of his rope, he sat lost in thought. "Can this really be true the madam has been telling, or, is it an hallucination of the brain? No, no! I cannot ascribe it in that way, for her will is to be drawn and there

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must be no doubt as to her soundness of mind and perfect intellectual faculties.

"Really, though, it might be a pretext to defend the honor of Miss Hope—being a sister of Truth, in whom she is wholly and strictly a devotee. Again, though, I am at random, for this old lady is no hypocrite. But what if it should be an illusion, after all?

"I could espouse the cause of Miss Hope with security of success. But the will! What of that? A loophole would be ready for a contest. Attorney Goodman's judgment must not be at stake! This is a serious turn of affairs which I must decide scrupulously." Thus reflecting, he said:

"Madam, this dilemma must be solved. Can I consider you correct in affirming that there existed coins termed as 'Uncle's Sacred Money?'"

"Why, certainly, Attorney Goodman." And the interested woman concisely recounted the circumstances attendant to the Lump of Gold, dwelling particularly on the fact that Miss Faith Fairchild's believing in her own efficiency of faith, could, with the aid of her sisters—Truth, Love, Hope, and Charity—easily revolve its course through the center of the common wealth, striving to earn a livelihood by frugality, honorable toil and uncorrupted principles."

"Your explanation is satisfactory, clear and comprehensive, but I am afraid Miss Hope's case is ruined unless I resort to technicalities in order to

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stupefy the judge, jury and people, which I consider degrading to the lowest degree, in our Christian nation that boasts of its superiority in self-government, for it is tantamount to an evasion or subterfuge of the criminal truth and would be a reproach to my dignity as a lawyer."

Attorney Goodman's motto, since having become a practitioner, had been: "The prevailment of truth." Thus noting that his client was becoming weary, he said:

"Your will is now at issue; we will proceed, as it must be witnessed while you are vigorous. Please ring for your witnesses."

Touching the button, Juliette and Nanette responded to her call.

"Girls," said she, "Attorney Goodman has written my will, which I have dictated to him. Although in the decline of life I believe you can testify that my mind is unclouded and free from undue influence, so that you can voluntarily sign it as my witnesses. Also, I ask your forbearance to speak of it to others than yourselves."

"I solemnly promise, my dear mistress," said Juliette, while tears trickled down her rosy cheeks. And Nanette, likewise affected, repeated the same promise.

"There is no occasion to weep, my dears. Many years may elapse before it is required," kindly said the old lady.

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Both maids fondly kissed her forehead, then proceeded to make her comfortable by arranging the pillows and coverings which had become tossed in her exciting episode.

Attorney Goodman came to her bedside and said: "Madam, will you please state before these witnesses if any person or persons have used any undue influence with you as to the assigning of your property?"

"It is solely my volition. I alone am responsible for the allotments to my special legatees. They having had no knowledge whatever that I contemplated making my will."

"Young ladies, have you a doubt as to the sanity and clearness of mind of your mistress—the madam here?"

"No sir. I have every confidence in her rational faculties," said Juliette.

"I know she is sane," answered Nanette.

"Could you take your oath that such is the case?"

"Yes, Attorney, we could," in one breath they answered.

Again the attorney asked, that every shade of doubt be removed: "Madam, you are certain that you had one thousand dollars of the so-called 'Uncle's Sacred Money?'"

"Yes, I received it at the bank and Truth has been constantly with me since," she answered.

"Was there more of it, Madam?"

"O, yes, Attorney Goodman."

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"Hey-hey," he articulated, and asked the witnesses to affix their signatures. After having seen the old lady sign it, he took his departure, with a request from the venerable lady to place the will in her safe deposit box at the bank.

This had consumed several hours. The maids served nourishment, drew the curtains, administered the elixir to quiet her nerves that their mistress might seek restful slumber, which, despite the position, was very obstinate in granting the overtaxed mind a speedy relaxation. But morpheus, in time, sealed the eyelids and laid the mantle of unconsciousness over the emaciated body, kindly eliminating the harassing cares of life that a new strength might succor her to regain her lost health.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Jingle, jingle, jingle! sharply rattled the old-fashioned doorbell—the old lady not caring for the new-fangled things—seemingly with more impetuosity than usual. The vehement tones crashed through the quietude of the house and reached the ears of the soundly sleeping aged woman producing a most startling effect.

She sprang bolt upright in bed, and with wide open, glaring eyes, sat trembling in every limb, as she stared into the face of her intruder, Jeallo, who recklessly dashed in without even heeding to give

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the tap, tap signal for entrance to the sick chamber, saying:

"Oh, Aunt, I am glad you are up and awake. Mr. Peabody and I, tiring of the races—as there was some misunderstanding about the horses being run—took a cruise, motoring arouning the country instead.

"Look, Aunt, he has given me those beautiful diamonds of which I told you, and said they represent quite a fortune and should anything happen to him I would be well provided for. Was not he thoughtfully kind?

"And Aunt, I will not require an engagement ring now. You can see why, for there is a sweet little plain gold band on my finger instead."

"We concluded to give you a surprise, after all, and save much bother and perplexity now that you are ill—besides, you would feel unpleasant with having those desperate coughing convulsions in case we had a home wedding. But we are married, and I am jolly happy now that it is all over. We autoed to a little town and Mr. Peabody procured the license, then a minister, who performed the ceremonial services in the cutest little church you ever saw, so quickly that I scarcely realized when I became Mrs. Peabody.

"Is he not a darling, Aunt? He said since I belong to him now the landing of his ship of pure gold does not worry him so much, but without doubt will arrive tonight. Is it not splendid?

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"Nevertheless, he feels uneasy about you and asked me to return and tell you about our marriage. He supposed my dower dot had already been arranged and of course now you will expedite the matter immediately.

"He mentioned, though, that being old and very ill that I should suggest that you make your will. Shall I phone for a lawyer, aunt?"

"No, Jeallo. I shall never make my will again."

"Oh, then aunt you have already done so. Well, that is good, and it will be a great relief to Harry, as he especially dotes on you. but loves me. Of course, I know you have willed me quite a fortune, as your's is so great. Is it not lucky you had such a rich brother to die away off in Australia? And now I can buy me a confirmation dress if I can find one that is as lovely as that other and not have to ask Harry for the money, either. I must go to Harry now, who is waiting. I know he will be overjoyed, although he is somewhat anxious about our ship he expects tonight.

"Wouldn't it be a-w-f-u-l if a whirlwind or an earthquake should topple it over and spill all of Harry's pure gold into the ocean? But we would have to get it someway. Good-bye, aunt, don't look for us tonight, as I do not want to meet that Truth at dinner."

Jeallo, enraptured by her own selfish private interest, had not noticed the increasing pallor of her aunt, or the convulsive effort to breathe as she

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placed her hand over her heart to quiet its throbbings. Truth had not yet returned, as Attorney Goodman had met her and said he wanted to hear the story from her of "Uncle's Sacred Money," for her sister Hope's life depended on him and he must conscientiously do all he could to save it. The maids, always on the alert, had heard the confusion and on Jeallo's departure entered the room and found their mistress unconscious. Never having seen a person in that condition, they thought her dead and were apathetic and speechless from fright.

Fortunately, Truth arrived at that opportune moment and viewing the situation turned deathly pale and frantically cried: "Juliette! Nanette! Girls, call a doctor quickly. Oh, be quick, girls." And when the physician arrived he used his utmost skill to instill the old lady with vitality. To a certain extent he was successful, but her resuscitation was attended by such severe spasmodic coughing that she relaxed through weakness into a stupor and before morning lapsed into the long, long slumber from which there is no awakening.

CHAPTER XXIV.

True to her word, Jeallo did not return home that night, but came early the following morning. Meeting Juliette at the door, she said:

"I thought I would take a run home to see how aunt is this morning. Harry did not come, as he

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is out of sorts because he did not hail his ship of gold last night, and is now with his glass surveying the sea coast. I told him he would become blind straining his eyes so much, then he could not see aunt at all, so he said, "To show that he loved her he would send his remembrances!" Why, Juliette! how red your eyes are! Have you been crying? Has your lover played truant? Or what is the matter?"

Sobbingly, Juliette answered: "Oh, Miss Jeallo, my dear mistress is dead—died this morning early."

"Is that so? How sudden!" laconically said the hard-hearted Jeallo, who had never been known to shed sympathetic tears. "The dear—old—soul—I am so glad she made her will in time. I must go and tell Harry and he will be, too. It was well I bade her good-bye before I went away; also told of our marriage. Oh, by the way, we cannot attend the funeral tomorrow, as Harry and I are to motor up the coast to sight the ship loaded with that pure gold. But—yes, we must be back in a few days, by the time the will is read. As I am one of the heirs, it will oblige me to be there to hear it. Harry, I am sure, will attend, for he took such a decided interest in her making one. I suppose that sweet, angelic Truth will be on hand, but it will do her no good, as aunt knew exactly how I had to admonish Truth continually or she would have let her die long ago from utter neglect. Bye, bye, Juliette."

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Contrary to Jeallo's expectations, the funeral did not take place the next day, nor on the day following, Truth having had the body embalmed to await the coming of the old lady's children. Hearing this, upon her return, Jeallo sent a note of regrets:

"My Dear Truth: We are so burdened with trouble about our overdue ship, which is loaded with PURE GOLD, that we cannot possibly lose a moment from our vigilance to attend the funeral. In fact, Harry is almost prostrate from ceaseless watching, and I cannot leave him to bear all the fatigue. Besides, if anything happened to it while gone, we would regret it all our lives.

"Believe me, lovingly your friend,

"JEALLO PEABODY."

"P. S.—Be sure and let us know when and where the will is to be read. J. P."

Much as Truth distrusted the affectionate manifestations of Jeallo as being genuine, she replied to the note of regrets the day following the funeral.

"Mrs. Peabody: Attorney Goodman will open and read the will of your 'aunt' at his private office tomorrow at 10 A. M., as the family are anxious to return to their respective homes. Very truly,

"TRUTH FAIRCHILD."

At the time appointed, the interested parties were on hand, excepting Truth, who that morning having received a note of condolence from her sisters, Hope and Love, hastened to send an answer by the return messenger. When Truth, belated, made her

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appearance in the doorway, Jeallo rushed effusively to her, saying: "Good morning, dear Truth. We have anxiously been waiting for you. There must have been very urgent matters to have kept you so late on an occasion like this. It is now five minutes after 10 o'clock."

"Yes," explained Truth. "I was writing to my sister Hope, that I would soon be with her to remain and be a support through her trial."

"O-h-h-h," drawled Jeallo.

"Yes," continued Truth, "My whole effort of loving sympathy will be given to my sister Hope to help shorten the days of her affliction, now that my sorrowing old lady lies in her tomb."

Mockingly sweet, Jeallo replied: "Well, dear, Truth, come in. They are waiting and you should no longer inflict the displeasure of Attorney Goodman."

Satisfactorily seating herself beside her husband, Jeallo, in a sinister undertone, said: "Truth has been writing to her jail-bird sister while she kept us waiting, and said she was going to her. I wonder if she will occupy the jail couch also. Being known by the name of T-R-U-T-H she positively believes herself immaculate and can convince the judge and jury that her sister Hope is too heavenly to have had a hand in killing that nice Bishop, so that I could not be confirmed in that lovely dress.

"Oh! Attorney Goodman is reading. I suppose night will be here before he finishes. In novels, a

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great length of time is consumed reading crusty old folks' wills. Why, Harry, darling, I feel just like a heroine in a fairy tale, whose god mother flourishes her wand, transforming her into a little goddess with chalices of gold for drinking cups, and the dew-drops diamonds, and making her toys priceless pearls." Thus Jeallo, lost in her outspoken reverie, failed to note that Attorney Goodman had completed reading in a clear, distinct tone, the brief, concise and comprehensive last will and testament of the old lady, and was returning it to its former receptacle, when she exclaimed:

"Why, Attorney Goodman, are you not going to read the will?"

"Mrs. Peabody, I have read it completely."

"Why, Attorney Goodman! When did you read it? I have been listening attentively and thought you had just commenced."

"Well, Mrs. Peabody, being not of great length I will repeat the reading."

And when his second perusal had ceased, Jeallo shouted:

"Go on to the end!"

"I have done so, Mrs. Peabody, for the second time."

"But Attorney Goodman, there must be a codicil," she almost screamed.

Turning the will so that she also might scrutinize it, he calmly answered: "No, there is none."

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"Well, I'll be switched," she yelled in hysterical rage. "That horrid, little dried up old witch had a great deal of effrontery not even to mention my name.

"There must have been a deal of juggling, otherwise her saintly ways were very deceiving, and it is shameful, with the sacrifices I have made for her.

"Why, I lost no time in coming to console her, as I knew that her delicate health would not permit the handling and care of the a-w-f-u-l big fortune which her only brother left when he died. And I have buried myself in that a-w-f-u-l-l-y rambling and d-r-e-a-d-f-u-l-l-y, lonely old house ever since."

Noticing Truth as she made her exit, Jeallo continued in spiteful wrath and sinister fury: "Ah, ha! but that escaping jade arrived before me, pretending she was looking after 'Uncle's Sacred Coins,' when it was Aunt's millions she craved. Her heathenish mode accomplished its purpose. But I would be pleased to know by what right should Aunt will it to her? There is an opening for a contest.

"The viper! No wonder she sneaked out securely feeling that she will have everything her own way. But Harry, dear, I will show her that she cannot so easily get rid of me, and also that she will have ample time to continue her moaning and harping over 'Uncle's Sacred Money.'

"And Harry, my love, have no more fear. Our bills will be paid to ease your anxiety until our gold

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can be coined into money so that the diamonds may not be sacrificed, either."

She had been so intent with her crafty spirited deluge of vindictive and revengeful expressions that she had not noted that she was talking to space, while fastening her glove. After learning the full significance of the will her husband had made a sudden, hasty, eager and violent rush for the street, while Jeallo was writhing at the highest, in her insane fury.

Discovering his departure, her lovings and rage knew no bounds, and exhausted her lungs by frantic shoutings: "Harry! Why, where is Harry, my husband? That wretch of a Truth has frightened him away." Calling from the door, "Harry! Harry! Where are you? I am ready now. Your dovey is waiting. That sycophantical parasitical of a woman cannot have enticed you away from your dovey darling, whom you told this morning was the very essence sweetness.

"Ah, I know now. You are teasing me with a joke. Or, rather, you may have rushed home, feeling that those diamonds were unsafe in that suit case.

"I am sorry to have troubled you, Harry dear, but I have them with me, and the best of it is—I am going to keep them. My name is not Mrs. Peabody with no recompense, and a 'bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.'"

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CHAPTER XXV.

On leaving Attorney Goodman's office, Truth entered a passing street car, which conveyed her to the jail, where she had a long visit with her sisters, Love, Hope and Miss Joy, then returned to her home.

The next morning she found a number of pressing bills on the *escritoire*. She had been in the habit of settling them even before the severe illness of the old lady. Then, too, as Attorney Goodman had read from the will that "Truth Fairchild was appointed sole executrix," she proceeded to give them her attention.

Going to the closet to get some money, she sorrowfully remarked: "It is very sad, yet I am thankful that this money, 'Uncle's Sacred Coin,' can fulfill this mission of service in the holy ceremony of discharging one's obligations to the living and the dead.

"My dear old lady would say, 'Truth, see that all the debts are paid.'" She reached forth her hand to draw the money from the china bowl on the top shelf, but found none, and stepping on a footstool she made further search, for she could not believe it stolen.

She called the maids, Juliette and Nanette, and with their assistance sought every nook and cranny of the closet, but with no avail.

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Wearily, Truth said: "Girls, I see no other alternative than to place this matter in the hands of the police."

Juliette, seeing Truth's look of exhaustion, said: "Shall I ring for one?"

"Thank you, Juliette, you may," courteously answered Truth.

The chief of police hastened to respond, and sent two of his most trusted men, who, with the assistance of Truth, even with her increasing anxiety and oblivious of her failing strength after such a long pressure, removed every article from the closet, ransacked the drawers and examined the furniture.

With confidence, one policeman called out: "It's no use, Miss Truth. Some thief has purloined that money."

Feeling heartsick and faint, Truth said: "And it is 'uncle's sacred money,' too. Will you kindly report the matter to Attorney Goodman?"

"I will, Miss Truth," immediately spoke one of them.

Attorney Goodman, without concern, quietly remarked, when informed of the loss: "I am not surprised."

But the policeman *was*, and stood staring at him in a most observant and bewildered mood, then said: "Perhaps I am a little daft, attorney, but I do not understand why."

"Not at all, my good man. It is my opinion that I can place you on the track of the culprit."

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"That will be a good job, attorney, for Miss Truth's anxiety is very depressing to her naturally strong disposition."

"Yes, her enduring capacity has been wonderful, and the intense astonishment at the missing of the coins termed as 'uncle's sacred money' must act as a serious drain on her nervous system. Therefore, we must honestly aid her in every possible way," quothed the attorney.

"Surely, attorney," assented the policeman.

"Well, sir, many diabolical utterances were made at my office by one of the assumed but disappointed legatees after the reading of the old lady's will who died at the house recently." And the attorney, continuing, recapitulated the scene of Jeallo's angry, immoderate and unreasonable repinings and of her sarcastic utterance, with an important toss of the head, that "Harry's debts would be paid."

"Attorney Goodman, you are right, and I will immediately get a warrant from the judge for her arrest."

Jeallo's narrow mind had not grasped the consequences otherwise than malignantly spiting Truth. She knew nothing would incur more harassing perplexity to her than the loss of "uncle's sacred coin." Therefore, with triumphant satisfaction, that very same evening took advantage of her opportunity and procured it. Exultingly she exhibited the money to the hotel proprietor, as she had believed her husband's hasty disappearance was due to the

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cause of uneasiness in being unable to pay their fare.

Jeallo was anxious to retain her husband's love, the which she foolishly believed he was powerless to help. Their first meeting had been fraught with eager and hasty reciprocal friendship, which resulted in opening the well-spring of love in his heart, but the fountain ultimately ceased its issue as he discovered the shallow depths of affection returned. In the superficial transparency he had discovered untruthfulness, deceit and mercenary gain.

Like the predominating spirit of man he disliked to be vanquished, therefore strove to subdue her by the god of love and to conquer with her own weapon of selfishness and dupe her as to his own wealth.

Consequently he delineated not the intelligence of the manly man nor yet the courageous, but that of the cowardly, inasmuch as, when his true love vanished, he continued the delusion for the sake of gaining the inherited wealth covetously sought by Jeallo.

Now that he had disappeared Jeallo did not bemoan him with a breaking heart, but the loss of the gold-laden ship was disappointing to the extreme, and without abandon wended her way to the wharf, hoping to find the ship. She did not hurry but took her time, that she might not miss her husband, for surely the two hundred dollars would pacify all restraint.

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She retraced her steps when she could find neither, and consoled her disturbed mind with the fact that she still possessed the diamonds.

Deliberating thus, she was sauntering up the street, when a policeman, placing his hand on her, said: "Mrs. Peabody, you are under arrest."

"What for?" asked Jeallo.

"No time for explanations or expostulations, Madam Peabody. Move along!" said he.

"I will not!" boldly Jeallo raged, and, when he took hold of her arm, fought like a tiger defending her young.

"Be careful, none of this, mum," said he, "and none of your back talk, either, or you will increase your penalty by resisting an officer."

"Well, I don't care, and will not go to jail where that nasty Miss Hope is, who killed the nice Bishop that was going to confirm me."

Truth, who had gone out to recuperate her wasting energies with the bracing air, by some freak of fortune passed up the street at the moment when the policeman had placed the handcuffs on Jeallo's wrists, whose ejaculations of rage were of such vociferous vehemence that it attracted her attention. And unconsciously, as when the pianoforte playing caused such havoc with her peace of mind, Truth placed her hands over her ears and increased her footsteps to a very rapid gait, exclaiming:

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"My, oh, my! How can one of my sex be so perverted?" Turning for an instant, she heard the policeman urging:

"Come along, Madam Peabody, I say!"

"You have no right to arrest me, Mr. Policeman. Arrest that hussy that passed just now," demanded Jeallo. "She nabbed all of aunt's money and is mad because some one secured that two hundred dollars so that she could not secure that, too, the tormented interloper. Her disgraceful sister is in jail, but I'll fool Miss Truth and not go there. Here, Mr. Policeman, are these diamonds as security for bail."

"All right, Madam Peabody, after you are turned over to the judge you can make your plea with him."

Truth had preceded them and stood at the grated window talking to her sister Hope when the officer marched Jeallo by, who called out in loud tones: "I came to visit Truth's sister Hope in jail, but will not stop now as I have an important message for the judge."

With complacency the policeman greeted Truth, and said: "Judge Quinn will require your presence in the court room, Miss Truth."

Reluctantly she followed, and Jeallo, not waiting for the officer to turn her over to the court, drew near and said with egotism: "Judge Quinn, please order your servant to take my big diamonds to a jeweler, broker or pawnshop and get the price of

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them, and mind that he honestly brings all the money back for me."

"Not so fast, Madam Peabody," intervened the policeman. "Judge, book this woman as a thief for stealing a purse of two hundred dollars of marked coins."

"You told me, Mr. Policeman, to make my plea to the Judge, and now you say that I have the money."

"Without a doubt that fact can be proven. And Judge, also book her for resisting an officer of the law. You bet, Madam Peabody, that will give you a section in the calaboose."

"Officer, do your duty. I have no more time to lose," said the Judge. Thereupon, Jeallo showed her teeth as does a snarling, grinning hyena, which is eternally growling as though it would be a righteous act to snap somebody's head off.

"Judge, listen, I say! I have some great big diamonds that my husband gave to me which will be more than enough to satisfy for bail money."

"Let me look at them, madam, if you please."

"Certainly, but that chump of a policeman will have to release my hands."

"Unlock the cuffs, officer!"

With a sigh of victorious relief she took the jewel case from her wrist bag and handed it to the Judge.

"Perhaps the purse is there also," remarked the policeman.

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"No, sir; it is not, you brute!" and turned it upside down with a malicious smile of revenge, as she espied Truth standing near, added "And sweet Miss Truth knows it is not there."

Handing the case of jewels to the officer, the Judge said: "Officer, take these to some expert to value them and let her remain here until you return. If of sufficient value, she can go on her own cognizance."

"All right, Judge."

As he started on his errand, Miss Truth went to the Judge and said: "Thank you, Judge, for not committing Jeallo immediately to the jail, for she may not be guilty. In that case I would not for the world have her character stigmatized."

"You need not worry, sweet Truth," sneeringly said Jeallo. "My big diamonds will amply satisfy all requirements and I will live sumptuously, even if you are to receive aunt's pile of money."

As Jeallo rested her mind by uttering this bit of scorn, the policeman returned. Handing the jewel case to the Judge, he said:

"May it please your honor, here are the jewels. I presented them to the Diamond Palace establishment and their experts pronounce them spurious, not even being of as good an article as paste—really more like crystal glass. To make a sure thing of it, I took them to several other places, and their judgment concurred."

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"He lies! he lies!" shouted Jeallo, "for my husband brought them home from Alaska and gave them to me for a wedding present."

"Where is your husband, Mrs. Peabody?" asked the Judge.

"I do not know, Judge. He went out when my aunt's will was read, which gave all the money to Truth and me none, and I have not seen him since."

"Take this woman to jail to await her trial," commanded the Judge.

The officer snapped the criminal bracelets on again.. As the click of the last catch greeted her ear, Jeallo's arrogant assumption for once forsook her and cringingly began to plead.

"Oh, Mr. Policeman, don't take me to jail. Please, your honor, Mr. Judge, don't let him take me to jail!"

Truth pityingly stepped forward. "Please, your honor, could not I bail her out?"

"No!" bluntly answered the Judge. "She has imposed too much on you already."

Obsequiously crouching, Jeallo cried: Please, your honor, oh, Judge, if I should give Truth the two hundred dollars, would you still send me to jail?"

The Judge had not anticipated an alternative like this, and in his short hesitation to answer Truth tearfully intervened.

"Judge Quinn, may it please your honor, if they are the marked coins—or uncle's sacred money—I

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beg of you let her return them. That really is all the importance attached to them."

"Yes, yes, Judge, it is really 'uncle's sacred money,'" said Jeallo.

"What," said the Judge, "are all the women going crazy over 'uncle's sacred money'? [Show that money to Miss Truth if you have it," commanded the Judge. "Policeman, unlock those cuffs."

Her hands freed, she deftly withdrew a purse from the inside folds of her shirtwaist. The policeman, taking it, said: "Miss Truth, examine the contents of this purse."

Truth poured the contents on the Judge's desk, and with a happy look said:

"Yes, yes, it is 'uncle's sacred money.'" Picking up one of the coins, she showed the Judge a small hole about half pierced through, close to the eagle's claws.

Bending over to scrutinize it closely, the policeman exclaimed: "Be gad, miss, that surely is your 'sacred coin,' and you have her cornered for the 'penn.,' that is certain."

This was an intense moment.

Truth—simple, tender-natured Truth, looking at crestfallen Jeallo, who stood quaking in body with chattering teeth, presenting a most dejected and cadaverous appearance as though the earth was opening to swallow her, then at the policeman, whose face depicted the most derisive scorn as he looked at Jeallo, and at the Judge, whose stern look

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and set features determined his uncompromising judgment. A feeling of the most profound pity filled her heart, although she knew that Jeallo's obdurate nature was under subjection only through fear and not really subdued and penitent. But Truth's soul recoiled from branding this young creature, with such a perverted mind, with the shame of guilt which might be the stigma that would lead her still into deeper depths of sin.

With tears in her eyes, she appealingly said: "Oh, Judge, please, Judge, have compassion on her. This must be Jeallo's first offense, and now she has returned the money no one really will suffer."

Replying, the Judge said: "Miss Truth, your clemency is without precedence and denotes the nobleness of your character. My forbearance, though against my will, yields to your solicitation."

"I am very grateful, Judge Quinn, for your leniency."

The Judge had before him two women to contemplate. "Truth," who was the personification of her name and the loyalty with which she defended it, together with her emollient supplication for merciful indulgence, won his unanimous regard as a woman of irreproachable renown.

A mere glance of the eye completely changed his meditation, for he saw in Jeallo a perfect transformation, which was not that of thankfulness but a return to a look of victorious conquest.

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Consciously his softened impulse forsook him and sternly said: "Madam Peabody, if you had your just deserts and I pronounced my own judgment, I would land you in the Penitentiary without giving you a sympathizing tear.

"But this lady, Miss Truth, whose very name and nature identifies her with the most exalted of the earth's inhabitants, beseeches me to set you free—even though you have let no opportunity escape to cast slurs of the most scandalous vituperations to plunder her of the respect of her friends, while yet smiling sweetly at her face.

"Such behavior is not to be admired, no matter how beautiful the outward surface, and if I believed you would expurgate it from your character I would be happy to say, as Christ did, 'Go forth and sin no more,' but your very countenance betrays you. Thus my decision is, Leave this community and State and let us see you no more, for your presence is an execration."

CHAPTER XXVI.

"Leon, Leon, O Leon Martmorelli! You will never know how I adored you, although I could not bring myself to invite you to be my king, which afterwards you told me had won your regard as being of superior maidenly modesty.

"But Leon, my true lover, if you could see your Marquita—who was once your queen—in her small,

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close apartment with hideously disfigured features, your very soul would be racked and overwrought with horror and disgust.

"O my beloved Leon. I may still call you by that endearing name while in no other presence than my own; thus live in the ecstasy of your love, for it is all that I shall ever know of earthly bliss.

"The happiest day of my life was that of the garden party, which was such a financial success and succored those deserving, dejected people. After crowning me you knelt on the dais, saying: 'I pay homage to our beautiful Queen Marquita. The sun adds not more brilliancy to the sky than does her beauty lend luster to the throne on which I, too, have the honor to have been established. Together we will wield the scepter strictly with one accord, subduing all strife or hostile feeling, that harmony may exist throughout our kingdom. I greet you, Queen Marquita, with royal favor for having ascended my throne.' Raising my hand to your lips, seated yourself by my side, and that fatal moment made you sovereign of my heart.

"Ere the close of our reign your soft whisperings reached my ear, which sent the blood of love rioting through my veins and painted the rose color of happiness on my cheeks and translucent sparkle to my eyes. 'Queen Marquita Forest,' came from your intonated breath, 'you have charmed me as has no other woman and I would that this day never end, or, better still, you assent truly to become my queen,

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giving no one else a right of homage, and consent to be my own true love.

“I would erect a palace small with a throne room, wherein we would place Cupid—the god of love—to reign supreme. I would be the subject to kneel before your royal chair and worship at the shrine of my beloved and beauteous queen.’

“You paused, Leon, O my king—you paused as though awaiting my answer. My heart rapidly pulsated with such loud strokes I was sure you could hear it. My tongue was dormant, not from astonishment, grief or fright, but from unlimited joy and bliss which seemed that of heaven.

“Then you said or asked: ‘What do I hear, Queen Marquita? Does not this felicity meet with a responsive feeling?’

“‘Yes,’ I managed to answer, ‘but I am overpowered with happiness that you should have such exalted love for me, and the throbbings of my heart must be as deafening to you as me. Surely it is in unison with yours.

“‘But you speak of only one seat on that throne and you a subject. Nay, nay, Leon, there must be two seats,’ said I, unconsciously giving him his Christian name. ‘Queen Marquita could not exist as an image of idolatry which could return the warm fervency of your love only by a cold, sycophant, staring adulation.

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“ ‘She must have you by her side, that she may partake of thy warmth to make her blithesome and joyous.’

“And Leon! Leon! O my king Leon, how it made my whole being thrill as you clasped my hand quietly in yours and said: ‘My queen, my beautiful queen, your desire shall be granted. There shall be two chairs side by side, and shall ever remain so through our great journey of life, not even the grave shall divide us.’

“Leon! my king, my king. I cannot give you up. This grief is more prostrating than is my foul and loathesome malady.

“What am I saying? Cannot! Why, I must give you up. I could lie down by your side in death, but not to inoculate you with an obnoxious, ulcerous, eating, fatal disease. That is why I disappeared so suddenly and entirely dropped out of your life. The doctor named the disease and I fled. Leon! Leon, my king Leon! Do you miss your queen Marquita? Do you miss me? Leon! Leon! farewell, farewell! I am sinking, good-bye, good-bye.”

This soliloquizing colloquy which Marquita indulged in was her daily recreation, until by sheer exhaustion she relaxed into weariness and sought her couch.

One day, after a most saddening recital, the attendant called her to the grating to receive her food and said:

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"Miss, a lady sent this card and is waiting to see you since early this morning."

Marquita, reading aloud, "Miss Charity Fairchild." At first she shrank from meeting a stranger, but her long confinement and great solitude made her eager to see one of her own sex, therefore, forgetting her unfortunate condition and appearance, mournfully said:

"Oh, I am so thankful." Then, with a rush of memory, asked: "Will they let her see me?"

"Yes," he answered, "she has a permit issued for the sake of charity."

Miss Charity Fairchild had been sanguine in her belief that she could do much towards the improvement of the situation if not the release of this unfortunate young girl, the knowledge of which she had obtained from the Humane Society, but on beholding Marquita at once saw how fruitless would be the attempt. Her whole soul was wrapped in a quandary as they each stood staring at each other through the grated window, consciously at a loss for words to give expression to their thoughts.

Then a happy smile replaced the somber look in Miss Charity's face, as the mind expressed what she could not speak. Ah, at last I found a true work for "uncle's sacred money," there is no sham here.

As if by magic her oratory was unsealed and fluently flowed the words. "My dear young lady, a mere chance made me aware of your presence in

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this place and had great difficulty in obtaining a permit to visit you.

"But I have accomplished my purpose, at the risk of the contagion, that my own eyes might set the seal of truth on your situation. No words have described nor my imagination fully pictured you as residing in this lonely, gloomy, sepulchral cell."

Solemnly Marquita answered: "Miss Charity, you are very kind and the words you utter are but the echo of my own wailings in this, my living death. Better had the waves swallowed me while in their embrace at the same time my parents lost their lives in a wreck coming from my native Italy."

"I heard no name from the Humane Society," said Charity.

"Yes. Purposely I guarded it from the public," evasively she answered.

"I understand why," returned Charity. "I overheard your monologue, which out of commiseration I could not interrupt, but wondered that your lover had not come to your assistance. But you repeated the name Marquita—Marquita Forest?"

"Yes, that is my name," reluctantly she answered.

"Marquita Forest. A pretty name, and I cannot upbraid you for your disconsolate longings. Have you no relatives to aid and give you comfort?"

"No. One day a newspaper of old date wrapped my eatables, which I eagerly scanned. Mamma Forest's death was chronicled as dying from grief

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at the loss of her adopted daughter. And her nearest of kin received their inheritance."

"And your own parents, Marquita, had they no relatives?" asked Charity.

"They each were orphans, having only foster brothers and sisters who were extremely jealous if indulgencies of any kind was meted to them from their adopted parents.

"Thus from childhood—although in different homes—they met in reciprocal friendship, then mutual affection which ripened into true love and afterwards were plighted in marriage, in which state they remained unimpaired, and even the arms of death could not separate them. I was their only offspring. Oh, Miss Charity, would to God that I had not been saved! The trio should, as they had lived, have met death together."

"Marquita! No, no; I pray you may be forgiven that expression. Let not despair fill your soul."

"But why, Miss Charity? What have I done that I should be tortured by this ignominious condition of my body?"

"My dear Marquita, there is no suffering without a panacea or balm."

"But there is no balm for me, Miss Charity."

"We are assured there is a balm, Marquita, else we would not be thus commanded:

"'Go up into Gilead and take balm, O virgin, the daughter of Egypt. In vain shalt thou use many medicines: for thou shalt not be cured.' And this

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balm, then, must mean the healing power of Light to the soul when despondent."

"Light, Miss Charity, is not that very vague?"

"Why should it be, Marquita? The Supreme One encircled this earth with an agent or force by the action of which objects are rendered visible, and created us with an organ of sight of such subtle delicacy that we might view them in all their splendor and magnificence. In fact, no effort was wanting to contribute to our pleasures, that we might seek the True Light without recoil or dissatisfaction."

"The True Light, Miss Charity. What are we to understand by that?"

My dear, we will look in this little book I have with me and find:

"The same was in the beginning with God.

"All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made.

"In Him was life and the life was the light of man.

"And the light shineth in the darkness: and the darkness comprehendeth it not.

"There was a man sent from God whose name was John.

"The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

"He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

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“‘That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.’

“Don’t you see, Marquita, that ‘God’ is the true Light, and it is that for which we ask to guide us in righteous ways.”

“But, Miss Charity, how are we to distinguish it from the light we see around us?”

“Marquita, dear, close your eyes wholly to visionary light and forget all else than the true Light, with which dwell in communion with thy whole spirit, soul and body, not as unseemly selfish, but in true-hearted sincerity, loving thy brother and neighbor as thyself. Then follow strictly without deviation the teachings of thy conscience, which is the Light transmitted to you to transfigure the soul into Godliness.”

“Oh, Miss Charity! There would be no conclusion to my worship of you if you could but impart to me the knowledge to lose the remembrance that my future can be nothing but an obscured life, overshadowed by the blackest of clouds, which emits not the refreshing torrents of rain to strength vegetation’s growth and heighten their animating powers as though possessed of animal life, but the whirlwinds and tempest-tossed hurricanes and cyclones that breeds destruction to everything animate or inanimate within its course. This is my doom, and I am filled with scornful contempt when the light of day or flashes of lightning by night reveals the

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passers by, who with index hand points to me, saying: 'Go not near! She is foul or unclean from disease. Approach her not!'"

"Marquita, worship belongs to God, not me. But for His love and your love I am a willing worker. My life has been spent in seeking the truism of the mendicant. But no incident met has been more saddening than is yours, and which will require our combined effort and steadfast faith in the All-Wise One to instill you with firm belief and adherence to the true Light and a method to fathom a retrieve from this racking restraint."

"Ah, Miss Charity there is no hope. A leper cannot roam at large to scatter the infection of the most loathsome of diseases. I have been here for months and you are the first woman who has dared venture near enough to talk, even though separated by these iron grates. My nourishment and other necessary accessions are poked between these bars with tongs, that our hands need not meet. Dear Miss Charity, I hope you will contract no contagion from me."

"My name is Charity, which means munificence, and whose home and duty is among the afflicted. How old are you, Marquita, and how long have you thus been suffering?"

"Miss Charity, your first question I will answer by saying I am twenty; the second by telling you the story or history of my life up to the present, omitting the one oasis in my desert heart, which I

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feel confident you heard this morning while waiting near my open window."

"Yes, dear; go on."

"I was fourteen when my parents emigrated to America from Italy.

"They were tidy, clever, honest and industrious, but their savings were not great, consequently took steerage passage among a most cosmopolitan class of people. It was rather an old vessel and not large, consequently not able to withstand the terrible gales and ride the monstrous waves encountered. In one of the worst she lost her rudder, therefore the winter storms sent her drifting hither and thither for days, through which I, not being a sea nymph, was unable scarcely a moment to leave my couch.

"My mother was courageous and did not succumb to seasickness. The last time I ever saw her was when she called: 'Marquita! arise quickly! Jump for your life! My God! we are being driven ashore on those jagged rocks. Come, Marquita, you must summon strength to get up and quickly or we are lost.' Terror stricken, I leaped from my couch, donned my apparel, wrapped one of the bed coverings about me, rushed with my mother on deck and joined my father, who clutched his arms about us as though to save us from being wrecked.

"I had been taught to reverence God, Miss Charity, and my unuttered thought was 'Only the arm of God can save us,' as I saw the gigantic rocks, with such ragged, protuberant clefts looming

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skyward above us, among which the huge and mighty waves of the boundless deep was swiftly bearing our rudderless craft.

"The rain came down in torrents, darkening the heavens. All else was remote from observation save the stupendous pile of stony material. Everywhere was chaos and confusion. Up and down among the rigging rushed the sailors, then to and fro ballasting the ship, which rolled and tumbled as though attempting a summersault play with the monstrous ocean waves, as she dragged her enormous anchor as ruthlessly as though trailing a tailor's thimble.

"The lifeboats were being lowered while the passengers—heedless of the pelting rain—were devoutly kneeling in prayer to Almighty God to assuage the storm.

"Never, never, Miss Charity, can I forget the scene which has ever been vividly before me. I felt a giddiness stealing over me, not from the inertia of the ship but sheer weakness, and exhaustion. My father had rallied and was putting a life preserver on my mother, when she saw that I was swooning and caught me in her arms as I was sinking to the deck, and I never saw them more."

"But you, Marquita, how were you saved?" tremblingly asked Charity. "How came you here?"

"Well, my dear Miss Charity, I was saved as you see, but it seems for a fate far worse. One of the cast outs of earth, and why is it?"

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"Marquita, dear child, I am not wise within myself, but we will again refer to my little book for counsel. 'For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord.

" 'Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, Who doth bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts and then shall every man have praise of God.' "

"But, Miss Charity, how can I praise God for saving me from the wreck, when all would have been over in a moment's time, to suffer the lifelong agonies of this most odious disease, which is the decay of the living?"

"Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?"

" 'For ye are bought with a price: therefore glory God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's,' read Charity from her book. Therefore, my dear Marquita, what does it matter that your body is wasting away while yet in life. It is but the temple for your spirit, and the ransom you owe. Your being rescued from a watery grave portrays that you might live to glorify God, your maker, spiritually with whole-hearted fervency, sincerity and truth."

"Miss Charity, how plainly you are describing this. I see now why this fatality may have over-

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taken me, I kept not myself in the presence of God, and was full of repinings."

"Really, the holy are often condemned to suffering, which is another one of God's marvels, but tell me: how were you rescued, Marquita?"

"When I returned to consciousness I found that I was firmly tied in a life-boat with a life preserver around my waist—doubtless the work of my lamented parents—and floating in the water. At first I was too weak to hold my eyes open, but was conscious as a sailor clambered in the boat and shouted: 'A girl is lashed in the life boat; shall I cut the thongs, Captain, or send the boat aloft?' The answer commandingly came, 'Send it aloft, mate.'"

"I could plainly hear the 'Heave to! Heave to!' as the sailors drew the lifeboat into the hold of the vessel, which I afterwards learned was one of the regular American ocean liners—and distinguish the tones of women among the buzz of many voices around me."

"As they severed my bonds I plainly felt the presence of a lady, with a voice like a seraph, bending over me, saying:

"'What a lovely face!' and as I wearily opened my eyes, added: 'and extremely beautiful eyes! Who do you suppose she is, Captain, and where could she have come from?'"

"Then I remembered all, as the Captain answered, 'Very probably, Madam Forest, there has been a shipwreck as a result of a terrific storm through

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which we barely escaped weathering.' Miss Charity, I perceive now that this bit of commendation of my looks, spoken by this good, whole-souled woman, has been the stumbling block which has caused me much of my unhappiness, and as my memory serves, I imagine I became very obtrusive and vain."

"What about the lady, Marquita?"

"Well! she it was who was most constantly by my side and nursed me back to life, although each and every one on board vied in contributing to my wants. But Mrs. Forest claimed me particularly as her own special care, and when we arrived in New York invited me to cross the continent with her. She explained: 'In pecuniary matters I am not rich, but am comfortable. I am a widow and childless, and have always longed for a daughter. Come, Marquita,' said she, 'and be one to me. Come and share my moderate circumstances and together, as mother and daughter, we will soften the labor of domestic work and filially walk through the journey of life together.'

"I, having constantly mourned the loss of my father and mother, listened to her words as being the panacea for my sorrow, and clung to her as though the sea again might rob me of a parent's love.

"The passengers benevolently presented me with a purse containing a good round sum of money before leaving the steamer, and as I had not gained

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strength enough to walk ashore, I was carefully carried and placed in a berth of a Pullman. The complete change in surroundings, scenery and bracing air, together with the most kindly and affectionate care, I recuperated rapidly.

"On all sides, I heard the expression, 'What a beautiful girl! Is she not wonderfully handsome?' Hearing it so often repeated and my reflection in the mirror coinciding, what wonder I became proud and conceited over my looks? "

"Oh, Marquita, how could you be so trifling? God gave you the beautiful face and form as an ornament to the temple in which He placed His spirit, and you were a malefactor in thus usurping that spirit to satisfy your own inordinate self-esteem, as though you belonged to yourself, and not wholly to Him."

"In the extenuation of my fault, I really believe, Miss Charity, it was more the result of ignorance than waywardness. I had not received instructions exemplifying my conduct so explicitly as you have unfolded it to me, or the termination might have been different."

"I believe you, Marquita, and am happy to hear you say so. So you lived with Mrs. Forest ever after?"

"Yes, Miss Charity, and although she did not legally adopt me, exerted her sincerest motherly care for my benefit. We had no conflicting scenes, and

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she was ambitious in sending me to school, where I became proficient and ended with a college course.

"In her loyal kindness she never failed in providing and helping to contrive my apparel to enhance my looks."

"I can see no wrong in that, Marquita," advised Charity, "which was truly characteristic of Mrs. Forest's love of the beautiful that God intended we should admire. It is a pleasure to utilize our talents in artistically arranging many of the adornments of nature to embellish the person, if we do not arrogantly parade ourselves as being selfishly superior."

"I believe you, Miss Charity. My foster mother would say, 'Those are lovely ornaments, Marquita, my child, but we must not forget that it was God who made you beautiful.' So that it was not she who inculcated me with pride, though indulgently generous and perfectly free from artifice."

"You had much cause for thankfulness, Marquita. Did you allow it to pass unheeded and with indifference? Did you also permit the omission of gratitude to the Great Father Who had so bounteously provided relief in your distress?"

"Candidly, I did, Miss Charity. But nevermore will I fail to acknowledge His merciful benefactions."

"I am firmly persuaded, Marquita, that you will adhere to your decision. But you did not tell me how you contracted this terrible disease."

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"Miss Charity, that is beyond my comprehension, unless it was on board the ship and was refractory in making its appearance. I mean no fallacy in thus explaining it, for really, it is my only suggestive point. I have no knowledge of ever having come in contact with a person having the disease."

"My parents were of the most cleanly and exclusive habits, each having descended from the higher class of citizens. And in my recreations they had simply taken the place of more youthful companions, therefore, Miss Charity, it will always remain a sorrowful mystery how I became a leper, as the circumstance of being saved while they perished."

"The conclusion on the liner was, that when I swooned they lashed me in a life boat and attempting to board it—after being launched—were plunged overboard by one of the furious swells and swept away; or, after having cast the life boat onto the water, before they could enter it the ship had crashed upon the rocks and all on board sank in the limitless graveyard of the deep.

"My parents had not known, Miss Charity, when they assigned me buffeting the mighty ocean waves—which at any moment might environ me in their swirling depths, or send me racing with whirlwind speed far in mid-ocean, where, should consciousness return, I would suffer untold pangs from thirst and starvation—that I would be subjected to a far greater fate and endurance of misery.

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"Oh, Miss Charity, you can sympathize but really you cannot fathom my grief. In the life boat I was unconscious, but now my whole soul is in a state of revolt. Adder stings are not worse than the agonizing tortures of this odious disease, and untoward loneliness of my condition."

Never had Charity's feelings been so deeply aroused, and with tearful eyes she said:

"My precious Marquita! My grieving child! Were it not for these iron bars, I would clasp you to my heart as though you were of my own flesh and blood."

"Oh, no! not that, my dear Miss Charity. Although my heart yearns for such deep affection, but I would shrink in horror from infecting you with my hated disease, which will continue its gradual eating decay until my vitality is consumed."

"I have no qualms as to that, Marquita, when my love and service invite me. My features might be marred, but ulcers could not disfigure the soul."

"Before God, Miss Charity, I promise that my soul shall not be impaired in future."

"I am loath to say good-bye, Marquita. I really did not think it so late, the hours have passed swiftly."

"Will you come again, please, Miss Charity?" moaningly asked Marquita.

"If possible, Marquita, and, I believe, I can make it so. I am here now by special permit granted through the Humane Society. Good night."

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CHAPTER XXVII.

On reaching her rooms that evening Charity indited a letter to her sister.

"My Dear Sister Hope:

"Much as I earnestly desire and crave to be with you to give cheer in this most distressing annoyance—it is nothing more, for Hope, in all her purity, could be guilty of no criminal act—I cannot, for I must fulfill the solemn pledge made in my early youth at the bedside of my dying mother.

"You remember, my dear sister, that, taking our hands, she charged each of us, while in the struggles of death, 'To live a true life, and follow the precepts indicative of the Christian name she had given us, and endure nothing to infringe on its loyal and earnest fidelity.' Seemingly I now feel the pressure of her cold, clammy hand, as she gaspingly said, 'Charity: In that name, my child, there is no limit to its signification. Be vigilant and seek the worthy, then give your all, or whole duty.'

"And how wise was she to have named you Hope—for it is *that* which illumines your life, overshadowed by not a shade of despair, even now, when the day is progressing for your trial.

"But my dear sister, the injuries which have seemed to envelop you are as a mole hill to a mountain compared with that of a once most beautiful girl, who too is incarcerated behind iron bars, not

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from crime, but for having contracted a disease for which there has been no healing since our Savior. I must go to her. At last I have found a philanthropic use for "Uncle's Sacred Money" Sister Faith entrusted to me.

"I know not when you will hear from me again. Surely, all will be well with you. May the radiance of your hope environ our pathway.

"Affectionately your sister,

"CHARITY."

It was several days before Charity—yes, more—a couple of weeks had elapsed—ere she again visited Marquita. On approaching the cell window she paused and heard talking, but only one voice, as before. In her compassion Charity felt that the conversation should not be interrupted, as she believed it contributed to the lonely girl's happiness to live over again the happy episodes of her life.

She was saying: "Mr. Martmorelli—please pardon—but I was sent thither by Mama Forest to consult with you. A family—Gallo by name—of my own country and of much worth, are in great distress and urgent need of money."

"The father, an university educated man, once a banker owning a lovely home, excels in the manufacturing of the finest of wines, brandy, olive oil, curing of raisins, and other horticultural work, having included them in the course of his studies while young. His ambition called him to America to engage in these industries, Traveling and the wants

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of five children in a strange land, where another language was spoken, soon absorbed his capital, which had not been great, as it was his share of an inheritance of which he had a tenth.

"He sought the vintages of California where by industry and frugality he prospered fairly well, until he was induced by a man—Trusti by name—to take charge of a property known as the Archibald estate in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountains, where the climate, as you are aware, is most superb.

"Mr. Martmorelli, you know of that estate, as it is very large?

"Yes, I know of it, Miss Forest, but am not particularly versed as to its circumstances, for it has passed through many managements."

"Yes, you are right, Mr. Martmorelli. It is a vast holding on which a large sum of money has been expended, to make it equal to any olive orchard in the world."

"I felt the flush of color rise to my face, and oh! how my cheeks did burn, for my listener's eyes were fastened upon me, scanning—in lost consciousness—my every feature with a respectful, rapturous, moving look. I was much embarrassed and with difficulty managed not to lose my presence of mind, so continued:

"The owner thought to make it a paradise, therefore intermingled his acreages with quantities of all varieties of fruits subject to the climate, including

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many intermixtures of nuts. I will not attempt to describe the labyrinthian walks outlined by beautiful shade trees and lovely flowers, Mr. Martmorelli, but Mr. Gallo was happy when Mr. Trusti put him in charge of it. He too was from my country and yours, too, if I mistake not?

"‘Yes, Miss Forest, Italy was my home when I was a wee one, but America has all my claim since. Will you return to your native land again?’

"‘O, no! Mr. Martmorelli, I could not leave Mama Forest.’

"‘I am happy to hear that, Miss Forest; we should miss you.’

"The tell-tale flush deepened in my face and I quite forgot the wrongs of my friends and felt much like a dullard, but knowing a necessity to collect my senses, I continued:

"‘This Mr. Trusti knew comparatively nothing of the numerous ways of preparing fruit to make it savory for a fastidious market.’

"‘Am I taking too much of your valuable time, Mr. Martmorelli?’ I asked, to gain time to collect my confused wits, as a result from not having mingled with the opposite sex during my school days.

"‘No, Miss Forest, my time is yours, and at your service. Go on, please.’

"‘Thank you.’ I said, and timidly continued. ‘Well, Mr. Trusti—as though good natured—interfered not with Mr. Gallo’s manner of manipulating the produce for the market, but was employed in

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another way. He sold the fine horses and bought old "skates" in their stead; sold the five cows, so when the mother and children arrived there was no milk; shipped carloads of oranges, also the raisins, prunes, olives and dried fruits left in storage by the former tenant, in fact, every available money-producing thing, and received the cash, so quietly that Mr. Gallo did not suspect the operation.

"One day said Mr. Trusti, 'Gallo, I am going to Mexico on a business matter. Am wanted to look after planting a vineyard. You are all right here. Probably I will be gone a couple of months.'

"So, so,' said Mr. Gallo.

"Yes, Gallo; but I am short of cash. Can you spare me some until my return?'

"Sure, Mr. Trusti.'

"And Mr. Gallo gave him all the money he had for the use of his family, excepting a few dollars of change in the purse, and Mr. Trusti left."

"That was shockingly bad, Miss Forest.'

"Oh, but Mr. Martmorelli, we have not come to the worst. Mr. Trusti occupied the big house and gave Mr. Gallo—the cultured man with sweet wife and five lovely children—the tenement house among the willows where the air was stifling with miasma.

"As a consequence, not long after Mr. Trusti's departure the little ones contracted diphtheria, with no doctor short of thirty miles and no money to pay one.

"An old gentleman and his wife were the only neighbors not afraid to render assistance, but even

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their kindly aid could not relieve the little sufferers. As Mr. Trusti had left the key, Mr. Gallo moved his family in the big house, but to no avail, as one of the little children died. The funeral was most pathetic, the old lady who attended told Mama Forest.

"The pretty mother nearly swooned off the piazza as they bore the little white coffin away, for which the kind neighbor had become voucher. 'Oh, Mr. Martmorelli,' I exclaimed, 'I cannot begin to describe it, there was so much sadness.'

" 'And the other children, Miss Forest?'

" 'Why, Mr. Martmorelli, they bundled them up and boarded the train for this city, forty miles distant, without specifying the ailment.

" 'On arrival, the matter was still more difficult. The pesthouse already had a smallpox patient, and none of the citizens would take them in on account of the contagion. So the poor man procured a little untenanted place, where he took three little ones, the mother having remained at home with the baby that was not so severely sick.'

" 'Command me, Miss Forest. Let me know your wish and it shall be granted.'

" 'How considerate of you, Mr. Martmorelli,' I said, as I noticed his pallid face. Said I, 'Mama Forest with the assistance of a number of well-disposed ladies sent relief for their immediate wants, but the doctor's and other bills are accumulating,

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with nothing to draw on, and the anti-toxin must be administered freely to save the children.'

" 'Miss Forest,' he said, taking his purse from his pocket, 'do not be afraid to name the amount required.'

" 'No, no; Mr. Martmorelli, not that, not money. The ladies decided to give a garden party, and Mama Forest will relinquish rights to her whole house and grounds for one day, and they delegated me to invite as many as possible to aid us. They said we would have a queen and her court, also an unique idea, to have a king who would crown the queen.'

" 'Who is to be queen, Miss Forest?' he asked.

" 'As the time was limited they left it to a committee, and they selected me.'

" 'And the king, Miss Forest?'

" 'Well—well—oh, Mama Forest is not well—has the neuralgia—therefore I must go, Mr. Martmorelli. Could you not come over in the morning and confer with the ladies, Mr. Martmorelli?'

" 'Thank you, I will, as I am much interested in these children of our countrymen.'

" 'I am so glad, Mr. Martmorelli. The ladies and mama, too, are anxious to know your decision. Good bye.'

"Extending his hand voluntarily, I took it as he said: 'Miss Forest, do not hesitate in calling upon me for any assistance you may require. I shall always be at your command. Good bye.'

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"There was a light shining in his eyes which frustrated me so thoroughly I remembered not to say thank you.

"I went out with a different sensibility about me than when I entered. My heart was running riot with its rapid beatings, as though pumping blood through the arteries and veins into my face, which was burning with fever heat. 'I am not ill,' I said, speaking to myself, 'nor yet tired, but certainly abnormal.'

"More strange than all, I had forgotten those afflicted people, and I tried to recall them, but a spell was on me. I could not dispel the magic charm as I entered my home.

"Tenderly I renewed the restoratives on Mama Forest's head to assuage the pain. Then she drew me close and impressed a kiss on my lips, saying:

" 'My dear Marquita, how could I do without you, who is so full of affectionate love?'

" 'Love. Ah! the problem is solved,' I repeated, as I again drew the draperies to darken the room on going out. 'Can this be love? Was this, then, its meaning? That one's whole being is so filled with the most rapturous and ecstatic emotion that they are oblivious to the grief of others, their pains, ailments and all the harassing perplexities of life?' I said aloud in the quietude of my own chamber, 'This must be love,' and, as though talking to him, I said, 'Mr. Martmorelli, I did not come on a mis-

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sion of love but of mercy, for I would not deign to seek love.

“Cupid must send his love offering on an arrow from his bow to pierce my heart, else I let it lie latent in my breast, Mr. Martmorelli. Thus I cannot again consult with you on errands of duty, therefore, will say good-bye.’”

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Charity had no intention of being an eaves-dropper, but could not find it in her heart to interrupt Marquita in this soliloquy, seemingly the last interview with her lover, which apparently was real and living in the past, and was consciously happy while being oblivious of the thralldom of her disease.

Having ended the interview, Charity gently said: “Good morning, Marquita.”

“Oh, good morning, Miss Charity. I am so happy that you have come. You remained away so long I thought you could not again get a permit.”

“Well, you see I am here, Marquita, and will leave you only once more.”

“Oh, Miss Charity! Why is that? I shall certainly miss you and never cease longing, day after day, to see your face again, dear Miss Charity. Once more and then always remain away?”

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"No, no, Marquita, I find you do not know Charity. She never does a judicious thing by halves."

"How is that, Miss Charity? You speak in enigmas."

"Well, my dear, we are advertised to sail day after tomorrow on a liner for the leper colony on the peninsula Molokai, which is described as being divided from the main Sandwich Island by an astonishingly high cliff or wall of pali.

"On his way to these Hawaiian Islands, rounding the peninsula before reaching Honolulu, an illustrious writer, as he craned his neck from the steamer's deck, gave utterance of his first impression, 'The Pit of Hell. The most accursed place on earth.'

"A month later, by some skillfully planned and determined resolution, he and his wife visited the leper city, wherein he said 'The joys of his life had never been happier, although no inhabitants on the globe knew or suffered greater affliction.'

"They found the climate of Molokai exhilarating, the scenery magnificent and the inhabitants most entertaining and free from formality or prejudice. They were engaged in various occupations, contented, happy, and often indulging simultaneously in the modern recreative sports of the day.

"To that lovely place, Marquita, we will go. There you will have no more prison bars, but can roam at large and breathe the wholesome, flower-

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perfumed air and enjoy the companionship of an honest, benevolent, whole-souled people, where snobbery, speculation and graft are unknown."

Marquita not replying, Charity was nonplussed, but a glance in her face revealed a melancholy look quite relaxing into despair.

"Why, Marquita. Why this saddening countenance? I thought to see your face lighting into mirthful smiles."

"Yes, I know, Miss Charity. God indeed is good to send such a happy retrieve, but I would be committing a sin to selfishly jeopardize you to the contagion by accepting your unselfish and urbane invitation."

"Let your mind rest freely as to that, Marquita. Although I be your companion, I shall summon every endeavor to escape so perilous a disease by not coming in close contact with you or the inhabitants of Molokai.

"There is no place where I can invest these golden twenties of 'Uncle's Sacred Money' to fulfill the mission he desired than in restoring freedom to you and administering to your wants among those clever but outcast people."

"Truly, Miss Charity, not for the whole island would I venture there to sacrifice you; otherwise it is most tempting."

"Marquita, there is no backing out, for here are the tickets and complete arrangements are made for

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our passage. When I see you again, we will meet on the steamer. Good night."

"Oh, then, Miss Charity, I will bid America, which has been so fateful to me, farewell forever, but I will leave my heart with Leon, my king. Good night."

CHAPTER XXIX.

As promised, Charity was on board the vessel as the ambulance brought Marquita, closely veiled, a few minutes before the apprised time for sailing, and was conducted to a secluded but airy room in the hold of the steamship.

The captain had granted Charity, through the intervention of the Humane Society, permission to hold consultations with Marquita through a small screened aperture, easily closed by a slide.

The second day after sailing a gentleman of prepossessing mien, though with a quiet, melancholy air, approaching Charity, asked: "Am I addressing Miss Charity Fairchild?"

"That is my name, sir."

"You have a young lady, Miss Marquita Forest, in charge, madam?"

"I have, sir."

"Can I see her, Miss Fairchild?"

"Have you a permit, sir?"

"I have not. My name is Leon Martmorelli, and I have this," handing her a paper, which proved to be a license for the marriage of Leon Martmorelli and Marquita Forest.

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After reading the astounding document, Charity said: "But, Mr. Martmorelli, perhaps you do not know that the laws will not permit you, a healthy man, to unite with one afflicted with contagion as is Miss Forest."

"Miss Fairchild, we are not within the jurisdiction of the magistracy of men, but on the great waters, the interior of which has but one ruler—God, the King—Sovereign—President, all in one—and His law is, 'Love one another,' and I will obey and fulfill that law by marrying Marquita—my queen and only love."

"How came you here, Mr. Martmorelli?"

"Miss Fairchild, I had no ambition for business with my queen gone, but disposed of it and wearily searched—but all in vain. I knew not the cause of her sudden flight. Even Mrs. Forest, although aware of her illness, did not know the nature of it. Miss Forest's physician—true to the vow to his patient—even after she had gone would not make the disclosure, though pronouncing her disease incurable, and before he could arrange for her keep in some proper place she had fled, and not until yesterday had I the slightest clue as to her whereabouts."

"Yesterday, Mr. Martmorelli?"

"Yes, madam, yesterday. I saw the notice of your departure in the morning paper, also giving the account of the terrible malady and sad life of Miss Marquita Forest, and therefore I came on

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board the steamer just behind her, having followed the ambulance down."

"Well, Mr. Martmorelli, God's will be done. We will go to the captain before communicating with Marquita, as already her cup of sorrow is overflowing.

"Captain Kidd, this is Mr. Martmorelli, who wishes to confer about Marquita."

After explaining, Leon handed the license to the captain. Reading it, the captain exclaimed: "Why, man, are you crazy or do you want to commit suicide?"

"Neither, captain, but must and will marry my affianced love. Because she has fallen ill is no reason why our betrothal should be dissolved. And the only place on earth of which I am aware that our marriage can be consummated are on the high seas or mid-ocean, where God is the sole ruler. He sanctions the union of love—true love—and has tested our sincerity. Thus, captain, we shall take the solemn vows which binds us together for life."

"Are you resolved in that, sir? Are you certain you will not repent of this very unusual sacrifice?"

"Captain! sir! When Marquita in her regal beauty consented to become my queen, I assured her I would build a diminutive palace with a throne room. Now, although marring disease disfigures her body, the love and affection which comes from the soul is intact. And now a citadel shall be constructed, fortified by the great wall of pali on one

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side and the remaining ones guarded by the ceaseless sentinel movements of the mighty ocean waves, so that our segregation from the outside world will be complete."

"But you are no leper, sir. Why marry her?"

"And thus complete her destruction by polluting her soul? Not for the sovereignty of this earth would I become such a poltroon, Captain Kidd. And, Captain Kidd, no matter the port or the ruler, I am a law-abiding citizen.

"These depths belong not to human captaincy, but to a Supreme and more efficacious Power that can instigate them into the most violent rage, then—with no abrupt show of command or ostentation—calm to tranquil rest, thus creating a disturbing commotion for a cause which we cannot understand, but the effect of the waves rippling in quietude and peace fills our souls with rapture which we picture as love. Captain Kidd, you are governor of this vessel and your command is law, which, in unison with the Great Monarch on whose premises we are sailing, can assuage the tumultuous agitations of two tempest-tossed hearts and let love reign supreme.

"Thus, Captain Kidd, your acquiescence in uniting us in moral bonds will make the equation of the character of love non-critically pure and my remaining by the side of Marquita a benediction which no one but God can sever."

"Mate, call the chaplain!" roared the captain.
"To be on the safe side to land this determined

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man in the leper colony the chaplain will need to repeat his blessings, which I will sanction."

Marquita's soul was overwrought with tribulation and revolted at their marriage. But Leon's adherence to his inflexible resolution won her as his own, to be queen of his heart in the lepers' paradise.

The ceremony over, Marquita, with more enthusiasm than yet evinced, asked: "Miss Charity, why has this good fortune and happiness come to me?"

"Marquita, dear, I can believe by your silent and earnest solicitations to the Invisible Guider and God, which will ever be the mainspring to keep your hands clasped in happiness through the remainder of your life."

CHAPTER XXX.

After many weary months court convened for the trial of Hope Fairchild, and proceeded without interruption after the jury had been impaneled.

The prosecution handled the event dextrously, having incontrovertible proof, and rested their case.

Attorney Goodman, for the defense, made no attempt to establish a demented state, but instituted the fact that the robbery chieftain was no myth. And to verify the point that other inmates were dwellers in the cottage he minutely delineated by the policeman's testimony—who from Miss Hope's partial diagram had completed an outline from the

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Bishop's door direct to the cottage—that evidenced where numerous trappings of feet were made and that she was being held an unwilling prisoner.

The found slipper had tallied with the odd one she had worn on her return, the hairpin matched those she still had in her hair, the initialed handkerchief, the comfortable pile of fresh straw for a bed and the old, patched broken chair beside the barrel table, on which yet remained the slightly tasted lunch, evinced that it was Miss Hope that had partaken of the primitive hospitality in the small bedroom of the recluse habitation. Attorney Goodman invited the court and jury to repair to the cottage, that they might obtain a definite signification to satisfy their judgment.

"After which," said Attorney Goodman, "I rest my case." The Judge adjourned until the following day, when they would make the necessary inspection.

Appearing again in the court room, a different aspect pervaded the features of the jury. The stoical, fixed and obstinate determination had given place to a look of apprehension. The knitted eyebrows were studiously lowered over downcast eyes. The faces were drawn in thought, as though penetrating the utmost possibility in the contingency of guilty or not guilty.

The Judge, noting their frame of mind, arose and summed the evidence, dwelling particularly on the fact that the prosecution obviously had not con-

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stituted a reason for Miss Hope—were she not an accomplice—returning with the full amount of money. The prescribed “Uncle’s Sacred Coin” received not the pleadings, as having originated from an unsound mind. Nor did the prosecution attempt to substantiate how she came in possession of it. Had she companions, the circumstance of their giving it into her ownership is too preposterous even to be supposed.

“Gentlemen of the jury, I instruct you to carefully weigh the convincing proofs in your mind and admonish you to return a verdict, not through sympathetic compassion for this beautiful young woman, that still maintains the semblance of a Christian life as when being filially entertained in the holy Bishop’s household, nor yet for the deep affection of that Godly man, who is still revered with cherishing memory by his beloved people, but the conviction in your own mind, the substantiated and conclusive evidence as to who murdered the Bishop.

“Jurymen, you are the arbitrators to decide this case, and, if you are convinced that this young lady is the perpetrator, let nothing contravene to obscure your decision, but stand stanch to the conformity of truth and justice.

“If it has been settled in your minds as conflicting or a reasonable doubt, then your verdict must be acquittal, but if conclusive the judgment rendered

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certainly should be guilty. I now order your retirement for final adjudication."

CHAPTER XXXI.

The Judge's summing having proved effectual in bringing the full circumstantial evidence into a very small compass, the jury remained not many hours out ere they sent a message of agreement.

Recalling them, the usual course of the law was adhered to. The foreman, giving the official report, the Judge arose, and, in unfaltering tones that seemed to ring through space—so quiet was the vast audience—said:

"Jurymen, I congratulate your nobility in thus deciding the justice of this case. You could not possibly have rendered a different decision. You have done well, for youth, beauty and innocence—seemingly—were at stake and your mercy while the rendering of due justice to the Bishop was in the balance. His followers demanded an equitable decision as being a recompense for their great loss. His constant energy, exemplary character and devotional effort to bring them in accord and nearer their Maker was in conformity to his teachings.

"Fellow-citizens, these men, impaneled with the strictest deference to the law as jurymen, have weighed this difficult and serious matter in the scale of justice, and with no dissenting voice have decided that this young lady, standing before you

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in the prisoner's box, with eyes turned heavenward as though imploring the Almighty to condone her fault by publicly making known her innocence, is guilty. Yes, guilty of murder in the first degree, and the penalty is death."

The breathing of the spectators in the crowded court-room, which a moment before had seemed abated, burst into satisfactory subvocal whisperings that echoed into every receptacle of the spacious room.

Hope stood as though rigid in death with its pallor, her eyes transfixed—not heavenward now, but on a figure standing by the door, then advancing through the aisle and quietly taking his station by her side—facing the court and placing his hand on his heart pronounced the words:

"Judge, I solemnly swear that this woman is not guilty.

"Judge and jury, I am the robber chieftain. This young lady surprised the robber and Bishop's murderer and followed him into my cottage rendezvous, remaining until we were obliged to flee the country; then resolutely insisted that she would accompany us hither and thither, no matter what the condition or sacrifice, and deliver us into the hands of justice, unless we gave into her possession what she had termed 'Uncle's Sacred Coin,' that her father Bishop intended for the investment of establishing freedom quarters for homeless young men in the city.

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"Her purity of character won our respect, her demeanor our regard, and unwavering, sacrificing unselfishness—of which, as an example, her present act of giving her own life to save the guilty—our adoration.

"Her Christian principles and teachings influenced us to bow before the Great and Hallowed Chief who sits on the throne of eternal righteousness," pointing to Miss Hope, "and she is one of His angels." Then reached forth and caught her swooning in his arms for she who had been stanch and self-reliant in her hope as being the protector of her innocence, had lost consciousness.

"This is audacious," shouted a man from the audience, "a sacrifice to the death of our loved Bishop. Lynch him! Lynch this diabolical murderer! Lynch law requires not judge or jury. Coldbloodedly this man caused the Christian blood of the Bishop to flow, and the wrath of his people waxes warm to stretch his diabolical neck. Get you out, vestrymen, and hie for a rope, while we drag him forth with his companion in guilt."

The alarming refrain, "Lynch him!" "Lynch him!" was caught by many voices and reverberated from echo to echo, until the whole assembly was in an uproar of highest pitched frenzy.

Numbers proceeded to drag the defenseless man—who still retained the form of the beautiful, unconscious girl—toward the door.

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Suddenly they were startled by an unearthly scream, as though originating from the uncontrollable, maddening throat of a lunatic.

With horror they dropped their victim as they saw a tall, dark man enter the court-room and mount the Judge's desk, yelling with the rage of fury:

"Beasts of the earth, that lack only the instruments to gouge that man of his vitality, let go thy hold and restore that lifeless woman, or by the jee-whillo-me-cuss, I will send you to the blue blasting realms of the ungodly. Not again would I cause the blood to gush, but you accursed idots may compel me. It was not he, but I, Hidalgo, who spurted the Bishop's blood as he suddenly came upon me while renewing my exchequer from his safe.

"And you—carrion vultures—are no better. Had I not have followed my chieftain, ere this you would have throttled his throat—yes, the throat of my God-loving benefactor—with a rope to shut off his breathing apparatus.

"And you heathens, what do you call that but murder? When I clutched that money by that stream of the Bishop's blood I did not profess to know God, nor do I now, but I will take my chances against you who have murder in your hearts. Why should you also be justified in depriving that girl of life because of imaginary evidence?

"And that man you are holding captive never stole as much as a toothpick, nor committed a

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crime unless it was in rescuing me from the black depths of a surging creek which as a chastisement would have sent my soul floundering in the regions of the damned. Ever after my hand—whose love he won—for even bandits have that gift though dormant—dubbed him chieftain. As his family, he used every effort to arouse the spontaniety of good in our intercourse and all our transactions, which too often was unheeded.

“Look ye! at his manly bearing! He compares well with the scions of the realm of which he really is the prince. His father being the rightful heir to the throne was banished by a pretender who dethroned him. After which, bringing his queen and little son Rudolph with him, sought and found the secluded place and built a cottage home where they happily lived until death silently removed the parents to realms of the unknown future, leaving the son not to wear the crowned title of nobility, but that of unsullied nobleness of manhood. And heroically he is now showing it by letting you ‘villians’ take his life to save me, the most lawless and desperate of his band.

“Should our chieftain have called us—his followers—to rescue that young lady from your outrageous interpretation of justice to suit the unknown quantity of your violence, we would have accomplished it at the risk of any danger which might have occurred.

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"We make no cowardly pretenses. And here is the hand, and this the gleaming dagger I now hold aloft, which on my soul I had not meant to use on that good Bishop, but he found me transgressing and I struck for my liberty. My hand having been steeped in blood, relentlessly again would I have deluged it by taking the life of Porpoise Shorty had not my chief cried a halt. And my chief, my noble chief, afterwards suffered the agonies of death from the culprit he saved. A wound meant for me nearly ended his life, from Shorty Porpoise's self-cocker.

"Much to the commendation of Shorty Porpoise, his first act of gratefulness was in helping bury the noble animal he had slain when his master was shot—and then helped to nurse the chief back to life and giving him half of his fabulously rich gold mine of which the late periodicals had been teeming.

Bancroft Lib

"Ah, Rudolph, my beloved chief, I see the kindling of wrath in the eyes of this vengeful throng, which but a moment ago had flickered out, is beginning to flame, and I replace my dagger in its scabbard that Hidalgo may be true to his promise—but worthy chief to save Hidalgo from dangling by his neck in the air, to make food for the vultures, he must resort to other artifice or means.

"Fare-the-well, beloved chieftain, and the angel lady by your side. Hidalgo's spirit will soon join the crusade to gain a royal jurisdiction in the Holy

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Kingdom." Raising a vial to his lips he drained to the dregs its contents—and another tragedy had been enacted.

"The Bishop, having been avenged by the power invisible, the people settled into lethargic quietude.

Hope, having revived, heard Hidalgo's intercession and was with her sisters, who had rallied to his assistance.

Rudolph, with deep lines of sorrow depicted on his face, ignoring the multitude, said: "Miss Hope, you must know that I love you. Life is nothing unless I can claim you as my own. In the midst of this mourning give me the right to protect you. If your love is responsive and you acquiesce, place your hand in mine."

Receiving her hand, he said: "So mote it be, and we will have the judge unite us, that as husband and wife we can attend the obsequies of this man, who, though of a warped growth of mind, suffered death to save us."

"'Uncle's Sacred Coin,' Rudolph," said Hope, "can still be used to carry out the Bishop's plans."

"Yes," he answered, "and I will unite much of my blood earned gold to increase the magnitude."

CHAPTER XXXII.

"Shovel it in, boys; shovel it in, for every scoopful of that dirt contains morsels of that golden substance the whole world is raving over.

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"Here, Jimmie; hand me that crucible; this gravel looks powerful rich, so here goes more quicksilver to catch every mite of gold dust before it is whirled off. Jo, go and lower the gate a little; this water is rushing too rapidly; while you, Billie, will have to fork the rock out of those boxes all fired fast to keep those riffles clear, or you will run gold, quicksilver and all into the tailings.

"Hold to it, boys. Shovel it in while there is a good head on. That is right! Hold to it, laddies. This clean-up is sure to make a big showing, but I am not going to get sentimental over it, as I did the \$4000 one I, myself, took down to the mint, but haven't had the heart to go since.

"It wasn't much, but I got mighty rattled over it. Still, boys, between you and me, I'd rather it went into honest deals.

"It is strange I never heard from that lady, Miss Faith Fairchild, about that money.

"I'll bet two big red apples, and pay if you win, that she got robbed or swindled out of it, and felt sort of sheepish to let me know.

"Say, boys, there comes a female all dressed in black. I hope nobody is dead, for I don't like to see mourning. I wonder if she is waiting for some one, as she has stopped.

"Maybe she is timid to come alone to us miners. She does not know that we, diggers in the mine, will fight to a finish with lock, stock and barrel,

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and all the weapons we can get to protect the purity of a good woman.

"Well, she'll have to wait a spell until the water begins to slack. Charlie, get a pan and sample the tailings. I want to get it all this time, before I make the shipment, and it looks as though it was going to be a mighty big one.

"And I'll bet too big red apples—I'm mighty glad I bought the whole sackful, as I like to pay my debts—that those pesky robbers don't get their hands on this pile, either. But they were mighty close on my tracks when I took that other lump down.

"Why, boys, as you were not with me then, I'll tell you—a lone highwayman suddenly stepped out from behind a big chapparal shrub by the wayside of the stage road in front of the four horses, with a piece of blue denim overall stuff for a mask, with a rifle leveled at us and called out in a commanding tone to halt. The dumbfounded driver, not pulling up quick enough, the trigger snapped and whizz went the bullet between the rearing animals, never touching a hair, and a sharp whirring hiss sounded in our ears as it passed between us, and 'caplunk!' went right through the back of the stage.

"It showed he was a master hand at the business, and an old one, too, for quick as lightning, he covered us in range at the same instant eyeing us, loudly shouting, 'Throw out the express box and get you from there with hands up.'

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"I can tell you, boys, it was pretty ticklish, for it was a mighty close shave, and we did not clamber, but piled out of that vehicle mighty fast, and soon stood as though supplicating heaven to remember all our good deeds and let the bad ones slide by.

"But I could not be quite as devout as I might had I not have had that currency fitted in the lining of my coat and tailor stitched as neatly as when new.

"But, there, the water is slackening now, and you have done well, my lads, so when it runs low just take it easy while I go and have a little chat with the lady, and see what is wanting."

"Good afternoon, Uncle. I suppose you do not know me?"

"Know you? Why, bless your soul, you are Miss Faith Fairchild. Do you imagine that I, who have worked mines with seven hundred men under my employ at a time, and have known them years after on meeting in the street, that I could not remember the face of a lovely woman?"

Still retaining the hand she had extended in welcome greeting, he continued:

"I am glad to see you again, and that you have not forgotten the familiar old cognomen, 'Uncle,' which my best friends call me by. But you have changed woefully. You look worn and weary, and pardon me, if I say old, too, for I am an outspoken man and mean no slander or insult, either."

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"Thank you, Uncle, I believe you. You, too, have changed. But the unreserved ravages of age have no dishonor attached to it."

"You are right, Miss Faith. Neither has sorrow and you look as though you have had your share of it."

"Yes, Uncle, and if you can spare the time, I will as graphically as possible tell you what trials I have encountered."

"Go on, Miss Faith, the boys have had a pretty tough go all the morning to get that gravel through while the water was plenty so will be glad to lay by awhile."

Whereupon Faith, without reserve, enumerated the adventures attendant to the investment of his "Sacred twenties," and as she finished took from her hand bag a number of gold pieces, saying:

"Here, Uncle, are a few of the coins and the only ones I have been able to regain after having been plunged in the great arena of avarice with such avidity. It took all my strength of character 'faith'—to ferret them out and rescue even these.

"Uncle, I am sorry to confess that I entered this great work with a selfish reliance in my own skill and faith, which even the faith of our Savior might not have accomplished."

"And these are the coins, Miss Faith? Well, I'll be switched! Their luster is lacking, the crown demolished, the jeweled words 'In God We Trust,' erased, and the eagle has not even a claw left.

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"Why, Miss Faith, God Almighty knew what he was about when He created all of us mortals, giving us a mind and will of our own, with an instinct to know right from wrong, then turning us loose to work out our own salvation. I tell you, Miss Faith, He would have had mighty tough rooting around through all the gutters, nooks, dens, and blasted places of iniquity to gather up souls to inhabit heaven.

"Yes, Madam, and He would find mighty few to occupy those luxurious seats, which must continually keep His eyes keen to repair after all these ages. I would like to know where would be the time to sing heavenly anthems to attract angels to parade those golden streets which must have been a heap of labor to make, and an enormous spendature of money, let alone the quantities of gold it took to do the paving? I expect that is the reason it is so scarce, but bless your heart, Miss Faith, I have another monster lump almost ready for Him. Good-bye."

[THE END.]

